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FAMILY
HISTORY
WALTER

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A
Hoosier
Homestead

A HOOSIER HOMESTEAD

From the reminiscences of John Walter.

by

Enos Walter

Dedicated to the belief
that the family of Abraham Walter, that emigrated
from England to America in 1829, and whose living
descendents now number more than two hundred-
fifty, is a concrete example of the survival
of the fittest.

"Let us make us a name -" Gen. 2- 4



FOREWORD

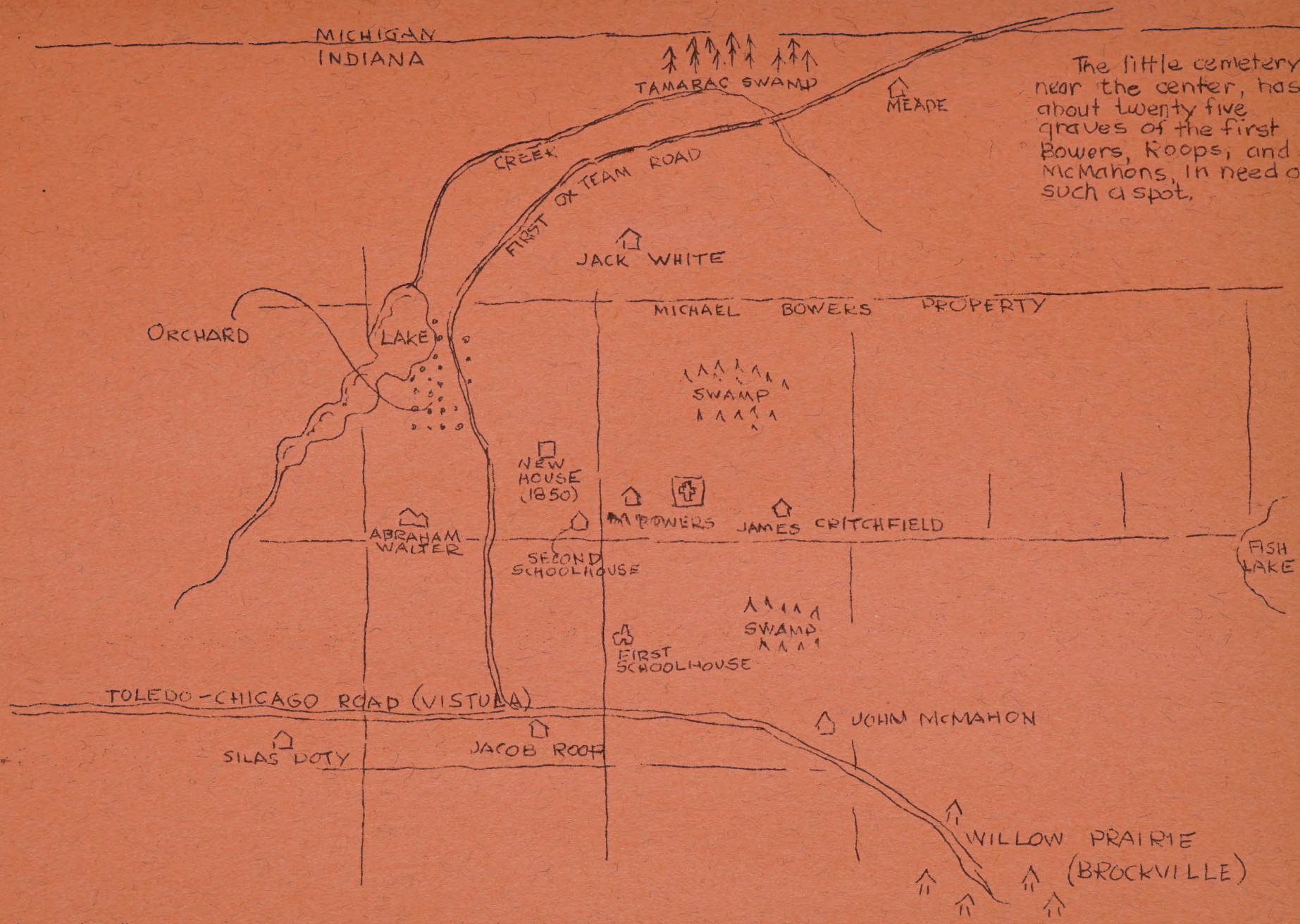
Our story deals with the fortunes of a single family. Multiply it by millions and you have a fair sample of the nation. It may not be as thrilling as some fiction, but to the reader who seeks to know the life upon which our lives are built, it is more interesting, because it is truthful. No hero rescues the beautiful maiden from the villain's embrace, no clever detective follows a seemingly impossible clue; but the everyday heroes of our story go into a country that has no roads, schoolhouses, cleared fields, good houses, good varieties of grain and livestock, and by their heroic efforts bring all these blessings. They were heroes indeed, tho they never suspected it. Before their achievements, those of the heroes of fiction fade into insignificance. There remains, however, much to be done, so let us be heroes and continue where they left off.

Most of our readers, while they relish a little philosophy if it be well diluted, read for relaxation rather than instruction, so let us dwell mostly on the remarkable and interesting events of our story, and leave the sober readers to seek instruction between the lines.

I have considered the days of old,
And the years that are past.

Psalm 77 -5





The little cemetery near the center, has about twenty five graves of the first Bowers, Roops, and McMahaons, in need of such a spot.

THE HOOE IER HOMESTED

CHAPTER I

BUYING A HOME

"Hard at it, I see"

John gave such a start that his toe caught in a sod and he fell down, spilling part of his pail of potatoes. He quickly jumped up and hastily picked up the potatoes, for his father was a driver, and the boys were taught to hustle. He glanced up to see who had spoken so abruptly, and saw a large man with a big brown beard and a merry face, who was just stooping down to help him. "Sunny" he said "Did not mean to scare you so, but just wanted to wake up your father. How are you, Mr. Walter?"

"I thank you startled us all," said John's father. This land is so soddy and rough I was keeping my eye on the mark, and could hardly keep track of it then. I was also keeping watch of Bob a little. We would like to have the rows so we can follow them when we come to hoe and dig.

"What share do you get?" asked the stranger.

"Half". And you furnish the seed?" "Yes".

"Well, I have a place picked out for you where you can do ten times better than that," said the stranger. "I have just returned from Indiana - that country is much warmer than this, there you can get all that you raise, and you can have land enough so you can raise stock and not have to nig for every cent you get". "How far is it from here?" asked Mr. Walter.

"Just a little way from the west end of Lake Erie" replied the stranger. "You can drive down there in the winter when your time is not worth much, so it will not cost you anything to move.

"I would like to get somewhere where I can buy my own home" said Mr. Walter, but land costs money, and I have never been able to get enough ahead to buy, or I could buy here."

"It's lucky you can't buy here," exclaimed the stranger. "That country has this beaten a mile; as for money, you would be as rich there as the rest of them, for money is something they do not have. You are getting along toward fifty, are you not?"

"Yes, I am forty-seven".

"If you stay in this country another twenty years you will be an old man, and have no more than you do now, isn't that about right?"

"It looks like it" agreed Mr. Walter.

"If you move to Indiana" continued the stranger, "I will sell you a quarter-section of land on a contract, for four hundred dollars, and you need not pay a cent down, but pay whenever you get the means. You may have ten years time if you want it. You can't lose anything but your time, and meantime the family will be growing up.

lose anything but your time, and meantime the family will be up."

"I'll think of it," answered Mr. Walter.

"All right. Let me take that pail, Son, and I'll drop potatoes while your dad and this other young man cover them. I am going to stay till your father thinks of the answer to my proposition. It will not take him long if he is as good at thinking as he is at farming, for I have been inquiring around a little to find some good farmers."

It is true that Abraham Walter was a good farmer, for he had learned farming in England at a time when poor farmers starved out. In England he had worked on a farm, but had married in 1818, and for ten years had tried to support a growing family in that country. But when the children had increased to six, he decided to go where land and food were cheaper, and so in the fall of 1829 had emigrated to New York. Western New York was then just opening up, for the Erie canal was opened in 1825 and had caused something of a boom in real-estate as far west as Buffalo. He had stopped in Jefferson county, some distance northeast of Buffalo, and even there it seemed to him that he was plenty far enough west. He found the land much more difficult to farm than in England, for there were many stumps and stones. Nor was the soil very fertile, and it took much labor to get a crop. Still he was in a neighborhood where several families from England had located, and he felt at home after the first year or two. There was a school handy, and a better school than they had in England. Also there was an Episcopal church, to which he belonged. But he could not get enough ahead to buy a farm, nor even a good outfit to farm with, but farmed a small field on shares and had a garden. Of stock he owned twenty-five sheep and two cows; but both sheep and cows were cheap, so the capital they represented was small.

"John," said Mr. Walter, "take Bob's hoe, and let Bob go to the house and bring another pail of potatoes." Then turning to the stranger he asked, "How much would I have to have to start there?"

"Household goods, a yoke of cattle and a cow, a plow and ax, and enough seed-corn and a garden seeds to plant a few acres. Then you ought to have a wagon, tho some do without one the first year; but you will need to move while snow is on if you have no wagon, and snow does not stay long in that country."

"And what time of year should I start?"

"The best time is in the winter. You should be there early in the spring, and cannot move easily after the snow is gone, for the ground will be soft. It will take you a day for every fifteen miles if the roads and team are good and your load not too heavy. From here to Niagara is about a hundred and fifty miles, from Niagara to Detroit about two hundred and twenty-five, and from Detroit to your farm about a hundred and fifty. Add a little for crooks and turns, and you have about six hundred miles, and if you start about New Years you will get there in time."

"It seems that so far away from market the cost of transportation would make produce worthless, except for the home market which would be very limited," objected Mr. Walter.

"Now listen" answered the stranger, "the new canal has brought Buffalo within the European grain market, and boats come to Buffalo from Detroit and Toledo, towns within reach of the country I am telling you of, so you will have a market for wheat and meat. And the facilities for transportation will grow better, so by the time you have your land cleared and have wheat and cattle to sell, you will be assured of a good market."

"Is there timber suitable for building and fences?"

"I'll say! Whitewood and ash for log buildings; oak, smooth and straight that will split like a ribbon, for fence-rails and shakes to shingle your buildings, basswood for troughs and sap-dishes, hickory galore for fuel, - and when you cover your fire at night, if you bury a chunk of hickory in the coals, you don't need to worry about its holding fire - and hickory bark, boys, for making a light for spearing fish; elm and willow that make the finest kind of charcoal, that you can sell to the blacksmith and so pay for sharpening your plow-irons and grub-axes; and boys, there are corn-trees, bee-trees and squirrel-trees too numerous to mention. Also there are many sugar maples, and you can have sugar and syrup for the making. And the best of it is, such a growth of timber is sure evidence of a strong soil that will produce big crops of grain and hay. And I have seen the ground there covered with acorns from the white oaks, and those acorns are equal to corn for fattening hogs and sheep. Then there are plenty of walnuts and hickorynuts. And I have about persuaded a man who has a grist-and saw mill over here on Big Sandy creek, to move his outfit to Indiana. There is a stream nearby that can be made to furnish plenty of power.

And there is game enough so your boys can keep you in meat. Deer, turkeys, geese, ducks, pigeons, prairie-chickens, partridges, raccons, squirrels, and all kinds of fish, and a lake on the corner of your farm, - why people lived there before any farming was done!

Soon as my sawmill man gets to going, you can get all the good boards you want for a little trouble. Those whitewoods saw easily and make the best kind of lumber. I saw one there that was twenty feet in circumference, and would make enough lumber for a house, but no one will cut it, for it would be impossible to get it to a mill.

And there are marshes there that will furnish you all the hay you need to winter your stock. Just burn the marsh over in the Spring to clean out dead grass and keep the bushes from growing, and after harvest you can put up all the hay you choose to cut."

"What sort of neighbors shall I have?" asked Mr. Walter.

"Well, the Indians are gone, if that is what you are thinking of," answered the stranger. "Most of your neighbors will be Pennsylvania Dutch and English, and I intend to get some of your

neighbors from here to go there. I have several pieces of land to sell."

"Is there anyone near here who has been in that country?"

"Several from near Rochester have located near Toledo. I think you can find some of their relatives who can tell you about that country."

By this time Bob had returned with the potatoes, and the stranger, after stating that his name was Eliakim Barney, and that he would see them again in a few days, took his departure.

Mr. Walter and the boys finished planting potatoes before dinner, and when they had gone to the house the boys discussed the move with their sisters, and their parents talked it over quietly. All seemed to think that there was no great likelihood of conditions being worse for them in Indiana, and two days afterward, when Mr. Barney returned, he found them ready to go provided he would contract with them as he had offered. He and Mr. Walter went to a neighboring Justice, and they made out the papers at once.

"Now," said Mr. Barney when the papers were signed, "get busy this season, and get ready RIGHT. Make up your wool and flax, scrape up a little money and trade your sheep for oxen. Think of the things you must have and leave everything else behind." The oldest girl, Sarah, was keeping company with a young man named Peter Grice. He announced his intentions of going to be married the next autumn, and with forethought necessary in those times, - Peter had bought a supply of wool and flax, and Sarah was busy making clothing, blankets, sheets, towels and yarn to furnish her home, for she was expert at both spinning and weaving. The second girl, Ann, not quite fifteen, was also busy at spinning, and had even woven a little when the loom was not being used by her mother or elder sister. Frances, the third daughter was only in her tenth year, but even she could spin flax, and knit socks and mittens.

There were three younger children: Abe, seven years old, Charlotte, a little past two, and Willie, the baby, only six months old. With such a large family, the time of Mrs. Walter was fully employed in superintending the housework, and overseeing things in general, so that her older girls might have nearly their entire time to attend to the making of cloth and clothing. Her hands were seldom idle, for she looked after the knitting and mending, with what help little Frances could give her.

Robert and John were their father's main help. Robert was fifteen and John twelve. In those days, when much of the culture of the soil was by means of the hoe, two such boys were great help. Their main crops were wheat, peas and potatoes. They had also a big garden and a patch of flax, and a little field of turnips for the sheep. Mr. Walter did not take kindly to corn growing, and in that section of country only the small early varieties of corn would mature. Corn was not then the improved cereal of our days and in regions with as short seasons as northern

New York, produced only small crops, and often did not mature. Mr. Walter and his English neighbors denominated it a "Yankee crop," which to them meant that it was hardly worth the attention of an Englishman.

The next evening after Mr. Walter had contracted to buy an Indiana farm, Peter called to see Sarah. He stopped at the stable, where Bob was milking. The other members of the family, except Mr. Walter were at the house. He had been shearing sheep for a man some distance away, and had not yet returned.

"Hello, Bob," said Peter.

"Hello, Peter," responded Bob. "Father has decided to move to Indiana."

"Well, as I said to him the other day, if he goes I will go. I think I can make a living there if the rest do, and it isn't so far away that we can never get back."

"I do not think I shall ever want to get back," said Bob. "All kinds of hunting and fishing there. Not so cold in winter, and the land is rich, and the trees easy to chop and split, so Mr. Barney says."

"O, he has land to sell there, and you cannot believe everything he says," objected Peter.

"Yes, but father saw a man whose brother lives in that country, and he says it is all right, and he is going there next winter," said Bob.

"I hope it is," said Peter, "because I am going, and intending to stay."

"I want to get a gun this summer," said Bob. "Father's old fowling-piece is too much of a cannon, and uses so much powder and lead that we shall never be able to feed it."

"I have a squirrel-rifle that is too small to suit me," said Peter. "If I can get one a little larger, I will sell it to you cheap."

"Keep it for me," said Bob. "I will earn money to pay for it if I have to work moonlight nights. I want to get a fish-spear too."

"I'll get Dick Sand to make two of them," declared Peter. "He makes good ones, and I have lent him my horse a half-dozen times, so they are paid for. I'll keep one and give you one."

"Good," agreed Bob. "Then what change I earn will go for your rifle and powder."

Bob and Peter went to the house, where for a time they continued planning for the move.

"What special thing are you going to do, Ann, to get ready to move?" asked Peter.

"I am going to weave two or three tablecloths to take along and trade for a gun for John," answered Ann.

"I am going to get a new ax," asserted John. "The store-keeper told me he would give me one if I would chop four cords of wood for him, and father says he will let me go and work at it when we have nothing to do here."

CHAPTER II

The Journey

So that summer all were busy. Even Frances busied herself with garden work to give her older brothers more opportunities to earn money; and when she was not otherwise employed, spent much time in knitting socks and mittens, for all had been impressed with the idea of a long cold journey. Six hundred miles on foot, or with an ox team, seemed a formidable distance. And could they have foreseen the roads, or lack of roads, it would have seemed still worse.

On rainy days that summer Mr. Walter and Peter worked at making two sleighs which they shod with pieces of strap iron, obtained at the neighboring blacksmith shop. The blacksmith was rebuilding a wagon which Peter had traded for, but which was hardly good enough to depend upon for a journey thru a region where breakdowns might occur a long distance from repair shops. They planned to load the wagon on one of the sleds, and use it on the latter part of the journey, should they find snow there.

The route they selected was to cross the Niagara river between Buffalo and the Falls, then go nearly due west to Detroit, and from there travel in a southwesterly direction to their destination.

They had some friends in Canada, but whether they would pass near them without leaving their best road, they did not know. Mr. Barney called at times that summer, and gave them many hints as to finding their way, and about deciding on their load. He advised loading lightly, for there were places where the road was bad, and there were many things that could be replaced by a little work there.

"Dishes, and irons, axes, and a few carpenter tools, clothing, bedding and blankets; a few traps, ammunition and guns, two or three scythes, iron wedges, a couple of chains and a plow, and a set of harrow teeth are about all you have to have," he said, "If you have to have the wagon in the latter part of the journey, leave the sleds and make some more if you need them."

One day in the latter part of September Peter drove over with his rebuilt wagon and new team, for he had bought another horse. He brought a load of apples, and said that a man who had been in Canada told him that dried apples were more acceptable than money in paying traveling expenses.

So the whole family peeled and sliced apples every evening, and in the course of the fall filled several sacks with the dried fruit. To give a little zest to this work of paring apples, Mrs. Walter had them all pair off, and each couple had a dish of apples to peel, and the pair that finished first was declared winner. When Peter was present, which was nearly every evening, he and Sarah formed one couple, Ann and Abe another, John and Frances a third, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter a fourth. Charlotte and Willie

were usually asleep at this time of day.

Mr. Walter was feeding an old sow and six pigs that summer and intended to make them into lard and smoked meat, and take it along to help in paying their expenses, and for provisions on the way. For it was certain that they must be a long time upon the road, and while some would refuse to take pay for keeping travelers over night, others would ask pay. And there would be many days of stormy weather when they would be unable to proceed, and also a chance that some would be sick on the journey. After much debating they decided to plan on getting to their new home on March first, as they were told that was as late in the winter as they could hope to use sleds. They estimated that they would be traveling fifty days, and be held up by storms, impassible roads and sickness thirty days, and so must start as soon as December tenth.

Peter Grice had decided to take his horses, and Mr. Walter had traded his flock of sheep and lambs for a yoke of oxen. They covered both sleighs with blankets and carpets stretched over a framework of hickory bows; and with plenty of straw and blankets hoped to keep comfortable.

The men and older children expected to walk a good part of the time, so keeping warm and helping to lighten the load.

They left their old home on December tenth, as they had planned, and found plenty of snow on their journey to Niagara river. At first they started the day's journey early in the morning, but soon learned that if the roads drifted shut in the night, they made it easier for their teams to wait till the middle of the forenoon before starting, for then the roads were likely to be broken. And they were agreeably surprised to find that they had little difficulty in finding a place to stay over night, tho the farmers along the way lived in small houses and some of the travelers usually had to sleep on the floor. Mrs. Walter and her baby and little girl always had a bed, even when two or three occasions Mr. Walter and the two older boys had to sleep in the sled. And, as a rule, they were not expected to pay for their lodging, tho they nearly always furnished at least a part of the provisions. The farmers were glad of company, and especially of a clean, intelligent and quiet family, as this one was. At one place they were compelled by storms and deep drifts to stay for a week, and when near Detroit they were held up by bad weather for over two weeks. At these stops the boys were eager to try hunting, but it proved too snowy for that. The region they were then in was also well settled and game was not plenty, especially at that season of the year.

On February tenth they reached the Detroit river. Detroit, they found, was only a small town of log houses, and except when lake boats were running was a very quiet place. They left there on the twelfth, and for the next three days found fair roads. After February fifteenth the snow became soft, and soon the roads were

very bad. The weather was not very cold and the days were getting much longer. A heavy growth of timber shut off much of the wind, and as the rate of travel was so slow, nearly all the travelers except Mrs. Walter and the three younger children walked nearly all the way.

They found the farm-houses far apart, and at times could hardly tell what road to follow; but by frequent inquiry kept nearly the right direction.

On February twenty-first there occurred a heavy rain, and the weather was warm, and the roads were soon bare. They stayed with a farmer four or five days in hopes more snow would fall; but altho it froze up again there was no snow, so they decided to load most of the goods in the wagon, leave on sleigh, and take the empty sleigh on bare ground. The roads were so bad that they made slow progress, and it was March fourth when they arrived in the neighborhood of their new home, and hoped to reach it the next day.

Mr. Walter, Sarah and Bob went on ahead of the teams next morning. They arrived at a farm owned by John McMahon before noon, and after dinner went on to the next house only a half-mile away, where Jacob Roop lived. He would be their nearest neighbor, and was glad to hear of more people moving into the neighborhood, and doubly glad to see that they were the right kind. Mr. Roop and his twelve-year old girl went with them to help bet their house ready for occupation that night.

Mr. Walter found the country much to his liking, only a little too wet. It was much less hilly than where he had last lived, and was covered for the most part with thrifty-looking timber. His house, he found, was only a trapper's cabin, quite insufficient for his needs; but Mr. Roop told him the neighbors would gather on the first good day, and help him put up an addition to it, and a stable for his cattle. They swept out the cabin, which had only a dirt floor, and built a good fire and cut enough fuel to last over night.

There was a spring of good water handy, and the cabin was built on a little hill, so the yard was dry. From the cabin you could see a lake about a quarter of mile distant, and between the cabin and the lake the land was mostly marsh. Mr. Roop offered to keep their teams and cows at his place till they could put up a shelter for them, and Mrs. Walter and the smaller children were to stay at Roop's the first night.

CHAPTER III

The New Home

And what did Mrs. Walter think of her new home when she arrived there next day? Probably a plenty! But we must not imagine she made any complaint, for she was one of those sensible mothers to whom any place was home if her husband and children shared it. And as Father Walter explained to her, they were at least done moving, for they had some claim to their new home, and were too poor to move back to New York. Some months afterward however, he, in a fit of despondency quite unusual to him, declared he wished they had never left England. Upon which Mrs. Walter exclaimed, "What does it signify just where we are? Did not you read, only last evening, Work your work betimes, and in His time he will give you your reward? We are poor in wordly goods but we have two very real possessions - hope and faith."

Father and Mother Walter were left alone to do the worrying, for the children were delighted with the new country. The very next day after they arrived, the neighbors gathered to welcome them, and to begin the new house and stable, which were finished in two days more. The old cabin was given a new roof, and the new one was built closely to it, so it was a sort of double house. The stable was well roofed, and tho small, was comfortable. The neighbors were busy making maple sugar, and while the men were employed on Mr. Walter's house the labor of gathering and boiling sap devolved on the women and children. Robert and John went nearly every evening to see the neighbors boil sap, and they were soon acquainted with all the young people in the neighborhood. Betsey Roop, the twelve-year old daughter of Jacob Roop, visited with Ann and Frances nearly every day, and sometimes her sister, Jane, came with her. The babies, as they called Charlotte and Willie, were a great attraction for them. They too helped their visits short.

This sugar-making was most interesting work to Robert and John, for altho maple sugar was made in York State, there was no sugar-bush near where they lived. They found that the sap was run from the tree by means of a short length of elder with the pith punched out. Instead of pails or pans to catch the sap as it dripped out, they had short and wide troughs chopped out of basswood. The sap was dipped from these troughs into sap-pails and carried storage tank, or trough, made from a large basswood log. Near this storage tank were two large kettles for boiling the sap into sugar. When the sugar-bush was large, the sap was collected by means of a large barrel on a sled drawn by a yoke of oxen; but Mr. Roop's sugar-bush was small and the sap was carried in pails. The boys soon realized that it took a lot of work to make a hundred pounds of sugar, for sometimes a snowstorm filled the sap dishes with snow, sometimes ice hindered, and again a rain would fill the

trough with water. As Betsy Roop said to John "There is not much fun in making sugar. I greased my boots with tallow and beeswax every morning, and wear two pairs of wollen stockings, and then this slush makes my feet damp and cold. I'll be glad when sap quits running. About the next job of this kind will be the making of soap."

"Mother was saying she was going to make some soap soon, and wondered where she could get a barrel to make an ash-leach," replied John.

"We made our ash-leach of slabs of wood set in a frame. I'll show it to you, and you can make one like it. If your mother wants a barrel or keg to keep the soap in, John McMahon has them to sell. He makes them."

"Where do you get soap-grease?" asked John.

"O, father saves the cracklings and scraps when he butchers, and all the fat off the coons he kills. Then he traded Mr. Meade some potatoes for some beef tallow and mutton tallow to make candles, and we may use some of that for soap."

Peter and Sarah were married just before they left New York, and after seeing the Walter family established in their new home, moved about ten miles away, where Peter had purchased a likely-looking place with a comfortable log house already built.

Mr. Walter and the older boys began clearing a patch for potatoes, garden and corn. All found this hard work, and so Mr. Walter declared they would work "English fashion" by which he meant they would begin at daybreak and work till one P.M. and then quit for the day. This gave the boys a sort of half-holiday every day, which they used for hunting and visiting.

One morning in early April as Mr. Walter, Robert and John were at work chopping down small trees and digging out some of the smaller ones, Mr. Roop came from the direction of the lake, carrying a good string of fish, and greeted them with: "Jane is getting tired of squirrel-meat and salt pork, so I had to get up early and catch her a mess of fish. I am going home and get breakfast, then coming back and show you folks how to make this work a good deal easier. Have you got your oxen in the stable?"

"No. We had not intended to use them today," Mr. Walter replied.

"Well, I'll need them to show you, so let the boys hunt them up and bring them here. Have you more than one chain?"

"No."

"I'll bring a chain and my grub-ax."

In a couple of hours Mr. Roop returned and trimmed out a small pole and fastened a chain to each end; then cut down a small straight tree having many limbs, and trimmed off the limbs, leaving stubs a foot long.

"That will be for a ladder," he announced. "Now we will lean it up against this grub, and you, Robert, climb it and take this line with you. When you are up as high as you can get, drop one

end of the line and I will fasten it to the end of a chain, then we will boost this pole while you pull the chain, and you hook the chain in a slip-noose around the tree as high up as you can, then come down."

Robert did so, and when he was down Mr. Roop and Mr. Walter chopped off a few of the roots, keeping about two feet from the grub. Then they hitched the oxen to the loose end of the pole and pulled its top over a little, and as it tipped they chopped off more roots and the oxen brought it down, pulling out many of the roots.

"That saves a lot of hard work!" exclaimed Robert.

"And gets out more of the roots," added Mr. Walter. "We are truly thankful, Mr. Roop, for putting us wise."

"I'm foxy," laughed Mr. Roop. "Don't think I will not be asking a return favor. I have been thinking that after the summer's work is done, maybe I could get you to teach my girls to read. There is no school within reach."

"Of course!" answered Mr. Walter heartily. "That will be a pleasure. And we must try to have a little school of our own."

"My girls say your little boy, Abe, has a book and can read like a school-ma'am, and they wanted me to ask you if he could come over and kind of get them started."

"Certainly, certainly," agreed Mr. Walter. "John, run to the house and tell Abe to get his book and come here."

Mr. Roop showed Robert and John how to 'line' wild ducks, and build bush houses from which to shoot prairie chickens. The old fowling-piece was just the thing for ducks, and on one occasion John killed eight ducks at one shot. Mr. Roop had given him a little shel ed corn and wheat screenings, which he scattered in a path at the edge of the lake. Then he built a shelter of bushes in which to hide, and early next morning waited there for the ducks. The air was full of them (this was in April) and there were hundreds upon the lake. Ammunition was too scarce and costly to shoot at random, so he waited patiently till a large flock spied the grain and settled down to eat it. When they were lined down the path John took careful aim and pulled the trigger. The gun was a flint-lock, and there was almost time to speak between the pull and the report, but as the gun was on a solid rest (a crotched stick driven into the soft ground) this did not so much matter. When the smoke and feathers had settled, John picked up eight good ducks and went proudly home, well loaded down, for the old gun weighed over fifteen pounds and the boy was not yet thirteen. While John was giving his attention to the ducks, Robert decided he would try the prairie chickens (*Tympanuchus Americanus*) which were very plentiful. These birds, in the breeding season, frequented smooth open glades, usually at the edge of a marsh, where they congregated to choose their mates. The choice lay with the hens, and the roosters instead of fighting it out, as with barnyard fowls, wooed the hens by curious antics and by loud and persistent crowings, interspersed with other notes resembling

loud laughter. The hens would stand quietly while a rooster would run along before them, with the feathers of his neck erect-ed and thrown forward, making a sort of hood. At the same time he would utter a peculiar cry that sounded like boo-hoo-HOOO, and so loud that on a still morning it could be heard for a half-mile or more. There might be as many as a dozen males performing at once. The flocks began coming to the crowing-grounds at daylight or before, and usually stayed till the sun was an hour high. These birds are about twice the size of a partridge, and a big flock of them was a fine sight. There was a crowing-ground south of the lake and at the west end of a strip of hard land called 'The Point'. Robert built a little shelter of bushes at the edge of the glade, and following his father's advice went to it before daylight, not taking a gun, but just to watch the strange scene. The next morning he took his rifle and shot one of the roosters, and expected they would all fly at the report of the gun, but they remained and sat quietly for perhaps a quarter of an hour, then resumed their courting, when Robert shot another. They then flew away. There were twenty-seven in the flock.

Pigeons and squirrels were numerous, but they were too small game for Robert and John when powder and lead were so scarce. There were many deer about, but as yet they had not learned how to get them, and seldom saw one till it was on the run, and they were far too slow to shoot them when they were moving.

The fowling-piece was so heavy that John tied a little stick to the muzzle end of the barrel, to serve as a rest from which to fire. Robert stuck to his small rifle and did fairly well with it. He hunted deer faithfully all summer, but did not get one till November, when there was a light fall of snow and their neighbor went out with him.

"My boys are both girls," said Mr. Roop to Mr. Walter. "A man that has four boys and four girls is certainly in luck. When they are a little bigger you could stand off a whole tribe of Indians."

"I hope the Indians will never bother us," responded Mr. Walter. "It takes a lot of provisions to feed so many, and if we do not keep busy we shall starve."

"Don't worry about that," said Mr. Roop cheerfully, "and if you think you have too many to feed, send Abe over to live with me. I have lived in the backwoods for a good many years, and never saw anyone starve; tho I have heard of such things, and we have been pretty hungry ourselves at times, but this section is getting well settled up now, and those days are past."

"It does not seem thickly settled yet," objected Mr. Walter. "We have plenty of free pasture for our cattle, but it needs an extra boy to bring them in. Last evening John and Frances hunted cows till dark and could hardly find the way home when they found them."

"I'll tell you a scheme my girls use to get our cows with little trouble," said Mr. Roop, "but till corn gets ripe you cannot use that. Bake a little Johnnycake every day and salt it pretty well,

and give each cow a little of it each night when she comes home; and so long as the Johnnycake holds out you will not need to hunt cows."

"I fear our supply of corn will be quite small," said Mr. Walter. "We have about four acres planted, but the stumps and roots occupy nearly half the ground. We shall be lucky to have enough to feed ourselves. And the squirrels and corns and blackbirds and pigeons will eat what little we have if we do not watch the patch closely. I shall keep some of the children and the dog out there all day, and tie the dog at the further corner of the field at night as the ears begin to form."

"O, soon as the acorns and hickorynuts get ripe the squirrels will not bother much," said Mr. Roop. "You are going to have plenty of pumpkins and potatoes, and you and Bob can help the neighbors harvest and thresh wheat and get enough for some flour; and this fall you and the boys can go down on English Prairie and husk corn on shares, if you lack a little. The girls can husk what you have here. If I had some boys they would be over to help them, but Mr. Bowers has a couple of boys that may do as well."

"I'll bait them with pumpkin pies," declared Ann saucily.

"If you put out any of that kind of bait I shall come along too," exclaimed Mr. Roop. "Do you know how to make pumpkin-butter in a country where are no apples?"

"No, we have not learned that," replied Mrs. Walter.

"There will be bushels of crab-apples this fall," said Mr. Roop.

"Just smash up a lot of them, and pick out part of the cores and stems - no use being too particular - and mix them with the pumpkin and it goes very well. Beats snowballs all to pieces for eating on Johnnycake. Then there are cranberries on the marsh. They make a good sauce if you have plenty of honey or maple sugar to go with them."

"I have found four bee-trees already," declared Robert. "This appears to be a great country for bees," observed Mr. Walter.

"I am planning to make a few hives and keep bees. It will cost next to nothing, and the honey one gets by cutting down trees is usually well mixed with dead bees and dirt."

"And we are going to have apples next year," said little Abe the eight-year-old boy. "Father had a lot of little apple trees in the garden."

Mr. Roop laughed, and Mr. Walter said: "We shall have some trees started, I hope, but I am not intending to transplant them till a year from next spring, tho I may do so next spring if they get a good start and I get a fence around the field that I shall use as an orchard. I brought a package of apple-seeds that we saved last autumn."

"Where will you have your orchard?" inquired Mr. Roop.

"On the east bank of the lake. The lake will help ward off the late frosts of spring, and the timber is not very thick there, so we can soon clear it."

CHAPTER IV

Going to mill

That summer Robert and his father put up four stacks of marsh hay for their cattle. John and Frances hoed potatoes, and Abe visited a great deal with an old and crippled Indian that came with a wandering band of hunters in May, and stayed all summer in the woods west of the Walter home, and not far from the spring. He was so crippled he could hardly get to the spring to get water. Some member of his tribe visited him occasionally, and Mrs. Walter sent him food by Abe nearly every day. He partly supported himself by shooting squirrels and partridges that came near him, for he used a bow with a skill that seemed marvellous to the white boy. Also he made baskets and traded them to the settlers for food. He made a powder horn for Abe, which Abe kept and prized as long as he lived.

As Mr. Walter had no wheat of his own to harvest, he and Bob helped the neighbors at that time of year, and took pay in wheat. A bushel of wheat was the pay for a day's work in harvest. With the wheat so obtained, they sowed a small field in the latter part of August; then with about ten bushels of their own, ten bushels belonging to John McMahon, and ten and ten bushels from Mr. Roop, they planned to go to Toledo to mill. Also they were to get a barrel of salt which was to be divided with Mr. Roop and Mr. McMahon. For hauling the grain to mill and bringing back the flour, and salt, for his neighbors he was to receive one-half the flour from the wheat furnished by them.

Toledo was said to be ninety miles away, and the mail was carried thru on the Vistula road (the road on which Roop and McMahon lived) once a week - the mail-carrier going on horseback. Their post-office then was Crooked Creek, about four miles west of them.

Mr. Walter was intending to take John with him to Toledo, and leave Robert to see to things at home; but Mrs. Walter and Ann declared they could get along quite well, and that it would be well for Robert to learn something of the roads in that direction. So on the last Saturday in August they loaded up and got ready to start on the long journey on Monday morning. They followed a northeasterly direction, but the only roads were trails running from house to house, and when they camped at night they were no more than eight miles, in a direct line, from home. One reason for their slow progress was the necessity of stopping to let the oxen feed, for they depended upon pasturing them. After they got farther east they found better and more direct roads, and from Adrian to Toledo there was much traffic. Traveling in this leisurely way they were a little more than a week in getting to Toledo, and about the same time returning. They procured the barrel of salt, which cost them ten dollars - the price of a good cow, or twenty bushels of wheat or eighty bushels (of potatoes - -)

of potatoes at that time. That amount also paid for twenty days work in the harvest field then. They little thought to live to see the day when one bushel of wheat would pay for a barrel of salt, delivered to within three miles of their farm. Robert and John enjoyed this trip immensely, for the weather was just warm enough, the roads were dry, and they traveled so slowly that the boys had some chance to hunt, tho to be sure they shot nothing larger than squirrels and partridges. They saw several deer, but could get no chance to shoot one.

Toledo they thought quite a town. In those days it consisted of only a few low-built houses along the river, and Mr. Walter, who had seen London, Bristol and Liverpool, declared with true English disdain of all things American, that it looked to him like a village of muskrat houses in a marsh.

But Toledo was a most important market for them; for from it boats sailed to Buffalo and carried to market the surplus wheat of that region. Also there were wagon and plow works, and steamboats were beginning to be used on the Great Lakes at that time.

After their return from Toledo they were visited by all the settlers within two or three miles of them, for all wished to hear of the outside world, and it was seldom indeed that any of them received letters.

One evening, a couple of days after their return, a son of Mr. Bowers, one of the neighbors joining farms with them, called to visit with the boys, and perhaps also to gladden his eyes by a sight of Ann, who was now almost fifteen, and if tradition be true, far from bad looking.

This boy's name was Michael, which of course was shortened to Mike by his companions. As he stayed till the usual bedtime hour for the Walter family, Mr. Walter got out the big Bible to read a chapter before retiring, that being a custom with him.

Now it is doubtful if Mike had ever seen a Bible previous to that time, and quite certain that he was unable to read. Perhaps Mr. Walter considered those things when he chose the book of Jonah. It seemed to possess all the charm of a new and intensely interesting story for Mike, and he sat in open-mouthed wonder while Mr. Walter read the first two chapters; and at the conclusion of the second chapter where it is recorded that the Lord spake unto the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land, Mike could keep quiet no longer, and exclaimed, "Gosh! I'll bet he give a devil of a jump!"

It speaks volumes for the discipline of the Walter family that no one laughed nor even smiled at this exclamation, tho in after years one of the children said he wanted to shout. Mr. Walter continued his reading till the story was ended, by which time

Mike was ready to go home, where no doubt, he told the wonderful story of Jonah to the other members of his family.

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Birthdays of the Walter children

Sarah,	March 19, 1819
Robert,	June 27, 1821
Ann,	November 26, 1822
John,	July 27, 1824
Frances,	January 4, 1827
Abraham,	March 26, 1829

The above named were born at Rothwell and Denford, Northamptonshire, England.

Charlotte, March 28, 1834.

William, October 6, 1835

The last two were born in Jefferson County, State of New York.



CHAPTER V

Study and Play

Early one morning in October Mr. Walter and Robert started on foot for English Prairie, which was estimated to be fifteen miles west of them. The English farmers there had plenty of corn, and Mr. Walter found a place where they could husk on shares, getting one-seventh for their labor. They worked there about two weeks, and secured two loads of corn, which was nearly as much as they raised at home. Soon after this the neighbors had a 'bee' and cut down a huge whitewood tree near the lake, and from it made a large flat-bottomed canoe from which to spear fish. Until ice formed on the lake, some one was using this boat every night when there was no wind. They used hickory bark in a sort of iron basket, to furnish light. Robert and John often went out and helped paddle the boat, and sometimes tried to spear, but at first were not skillful enough to get any fish. They learned fast, and by the next spring were as expert as the average.

The boys also had much sport hunting raccoons, which were quite numerous; and when Mr. Walter butchered a hog that fall and left it on a tree to cool, a bear was attracted by the fresh pork, and was just in the act of helping himself when the dog heard him and by his barking roused the boys who ran out and encouraged the dog to attack it. It ran away across the marsh which was covered with water. The dog was not very eager to chase it, and soon returned. The oak tree on which the hog hung has been preserved and still stands.

When the Christmas season came, the lake was frozen over and the ice was smooth. The Bowers boys, aided by Robert and John made a merry-go-round on the ice by setting a heavy pole upright, the lower end held by the mud, and the upper part by the ice. It was driven down till its larger end was only three feet above the ice; a hole was bored in top, and then a long sassafras pole with a hole bored thru it about six feet from the butt, was laid across the upright post and a draw-bolt from a wagon was used to pin the two poles together. By means of this machine a sled could be given a high rate of speed, and when released would slide many rods on the smooth ice.

One evening shortly after Christmas, Mr. Roop, Mr. McMahon and Mr. Bowers called upon Mr. Walter. They came to talk of a school for their children and proposed to Mr. Walter that all should join in and build a schoolhouse, as nearly as possible equi-distant from their homes, and that Robert Walter should act as teacher. The tuition was to be paid in work, a certain number of rails split for each pupil. Mr. Walter approved of the project, and a schoolhouse was built upon land owned by Mr. Roop. It was northeast of Roop's, Northwest of McMahon's, south of Bower's and east of Walter's Residence, and one-fourth mile from each. *

* In 1937 I placed a small marble marker on the site of that schoolhouse. E.W.

Robert Walter was the teacher, and Ann, John, Frances and Abe Walter, Betsy and Jane Roop, Michael and Holly Bowers, Peter McMahon and Jim Meade were the first pupils.

We need hardly say there was no fancy furniture in that little schoolhouse. A bench ran around three sides of it, and altho it was hewn out of basswood - the softest of woods - it seemed plenty hard. Of desks there were none, except a short table in front of the rustic chair of the teacher. Robert was himself only a schoolboy, and he sympathized with the little martyrs on their hard benches, and gave them long noonings and recesses. Peter McMahon was an active boy of Robert's age and size, and perhaps the brightest of the pupils; but he belonged to that numerous class of people that delight to show off, and think defying authority shows bravery.

"I can lick the teacher," he said one day to Mike.

"You'll have to lick me first," replied Mike steadily, "and when you are done with that job you will not feel so big. I can throw you so high the buzzards will build nests in you before you come down."

"I don't want to fight with you," retorted Peter, "for your feet are so heavy and your head so light it is hard to upset you, and if I had to run, you might run after me, and you are so clumsy you would likely fall and hurt yourself, and the neighbors would blame me."

When we reflect that the larger boys paid their own tuition by mauling rails, we may well believe that they were earnest in their efforts to get their lessons. Reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic were the only subjects taught, and books were few. But the greatest factor in inspiring the children to study, was their teacher's brothers and sisters; for they could all read, even down to little Abe, now almost nine years old, and Ann and Frances were the champion spellers of the school. Poor Michael Bowers, tho the largest boy in school, was the most hopelessly dull. All sorts of book-learning looked impossible to him, and were it not for the pleasure of sitting in the same room with Ann, he would likely never have ventured to try to learn the alphabet. He was present every day, and when spring came could recite all his letters, and write his name, and began to entertain some hopes of getting an education.

School was out on March first, and with the help Mr. Walter obtained by payment of tuition in work, there was not so much need of Robert at home, so he went down to Orland and obtained a job of driving a 'breaking team'. He worked at that all summer, and earned enough to help the family thru the winter. At his mother's request he wrote a description of the breaking-plow and his work driving, which she enclosed in her letter to her folks in England.

"A breaking-plow," he wrote, "is a large, heavy plow with a steel point which is sharpened by being heated and hammered to an edge.

when it becomes dull. The colter extends from the beam to the point, so that roots cannot slip over the point. The colter is also kept sharp, and these 'irons' as they are called, have to go to the shop often, for much of the land we plow has stones in it. The beam of the plow is six by eight inches, and is made of white oak. On land not too stumpy the plow is attached to a pair of wagon wheels to make it handle more easily; but in stumpy ground the wheels are taken off.

It takes eight to ten yoke of cattle to pull this plow, and its strength is sufficient to hold all the team can pull. Small stumps and grubs are plowed out. One man has to hold the plow, and the other man drives the team. The driver carries a long whip with a short and heavy lash, and when the plow comes up against a small stump, the driver cracks his whip and cries 'Hey-up!', and the oxen twist their tails and go thru it, if they can. If the plow gets wedged between stumps, the driver unhitches the head yoke, or leaders of the team, and hooks them to the rear end of the plow and they pull it back.

We plow a furrow two to three feet wide and four to twelve inches deep, and root up an acre or two a day, and get two dollars and fifty cents an acre - about ten shillings of your money. Not so big wages, but a little money buys a great deal here. Also we get our board. Who feeds the sixteen to twenty oxen? We usually turn them out in the woods at night, and never give them any grain, so their board is not expensive.

The blacksmiths use charcoal for their fires, and think they could not get along with stone coal as you do there. It is just as well they do think so, for there is no stone coal in this section of country, and Father says tell you he has not seen any for several years. Father and John and Peter Grice, Sister Sarah's man, have burned three pits of charcoal this year. They trade it to the black-smith for work, and get three cents a bushel for it - not much more than a penny of English money. Everything is cheap that we have to sell, and Father says it is as hard to get a dollar here as it is to get a pound there."



GRAIN CRADLE

CHAPTER VI.

The sick ox

Early in April; (1838) Old Bright, one of the oxen, was taken sick. He was bloated and would neither eat nor drink, but groaned and seemed colicky. The whole family was alarmed, for they had only two oxen and had no means of buying another.

Mr. Bowers claimed to be a cow doctor, and while Mr. Walter had little faith in him, he sent John to ask him to come see the sick ox. Mr. Bowers came promptly and looked very wise and important as he viewed Old Bright, and felt of his horns, counted his pulse, examined his nose to see if it were dry (indicating fever) and listened to the action of the stomach. "I think," he said, after mature consideration, "that he has the hollow-horn and likely has also lost his cud."

"Is he dangerously sick?" queried Mr. Walter.

"Yes, in considerable danger. He is getting old, and so his age is against him.-- Have you got a silver half-dollar?"

"I have," answered John. "I got it for four coonskins I sold last winter."

"Let me have it," said Mr. Bowers.

John ran to the house and quickly returned and handed Mr. Bowers the piece of silver. He took it and with it rubbed the ox from the horns to the end of his tail, going down the spine three times in the most solemn manner;--then put the half-dollar into his pocket -- and that was the last John ever saw of it.

"That is all I can do," declared Mr. Bowers. "If it does no good it will not do any harm."

Mr. Walter politely thanked Mr. Bowers for his services, but John was furious, and started off to consult with Mr. Roop.

"I have no patience with such mummary," exclaimed Mrs. Roop when John told her of Mr. Bowers' treatment. "Nor I," agreed her husband. "Come on mother, we will go back with John and see what we can do. It will not do to let Old Bright die for lack of help." Mrs. Roop took two small bottles from the cupboard and putting them in her pocket, declared she was ready to start.

"Mother is more of a doctor than I am, so I brought her along," explained Mr. Roop to Mr. Walter.

Mrs. Roop stood observing the sick ox for several minutes, then asked, "Has he had any feed besides marsh hay?"

"No, that is all we have to feed him. I offered him a nubbin of corn this morning, but he wouldn't look at it," Mr. Walter answered.

"Bub" said Mrs. Roop to John, "get me a dozen small potatoes and a couple spoonsful of salt in a dish."

Mrs. Roop borrowed her husbands pocket-knife, cut a small

potato in two, dipped the raw surface in the salt, and put it into Bright's mouth. The ox would have spit it out had not Mr. Roop held its nose up, and being unable to get rid of it he slowly chewed it and after a few minutes swallowed it. After coaxing the patient to eat a dozen pieces, Mrs. Roop declared that would do for the first treatment. He needs laxative food" said she, So coax him to eat potatoes and salt till he gets to drinking, then give him all the water he wants. He may bloat meantime, and should he seem in any danger from that, give him a tablespoon of turpentine in a little milk. Here is a small bottle of it, which I hope you will not need. Better see him often so as not to let the bloat get too much start. I think he will be over it in a couple of days, and not likely sooner than that."

The whole Walter family had gathered at the stable to see M Mrs Roop doctor the ox. "How about giving him some flaxseed tea? We have more of the seed than we need to plant?" said Mrs. Walter.

"It would be a good help, and so long as he refuses to drink you might give him some two or two or three times a day." "Do you know what such a case reminds me of?" Mrs. Roop continued, with a sly glance at the young folks. "his stomach is full of food, but he cannot use it, so there is danger of it fermenting and bloating him. So I think of people who get their heads too full of ideas that they cannot use, and sometimes those ideas ferment and swell and folks say they have the big-head. Like chicken-pox, that is mostly a disease of young folks."

"But I have seen that disease become chronic, and the patient never fully recover," said Mr. Roop, "so do not be too fast to believe young people are the only ones affected."

"well, we are surely thankful for your help," said Mr. Walter, and I have great faith in your skill."

"Come to the house and let Ann show the cloth she is weaving for a new dress. She has outgrown the one she is now wearing, and will soon need another." said Mrs. Walter. Mrs Roop examined the cloth with great interest. It was woven in small checks of blue and green, and the strong, was not too heavy.

"That is one of the finest pieces of dress- goods I ever had my hands on" exclaimed Mrs. Roop enthusiastically. "I have used a spinning wheel ever since I was a girl, but I never learned to weave - in fact never owned a loom. This weaving in checks must take a lot of time."

"Not so much longer than weaving all one color" Ann replied. You see I have one shuttle filled with brown and one with blue and after a certain number threads of one, I cut that shuttle loose and change to the other. Then I use half white warp, and half colored. That is linen, which makes it a little lighter and I think it is plenty heavy."

"I would like to send my girls over to see you weave, if it would not trouble you. Perhaps they could learn."

"They would be no trouble at all," declared Mrs. Walter. "If they want some cloth like this, and will bring the yarn, Ann will help them weave. "Thanks, thanks" exclaimed Mrs. Reop. "It will be a great thing for the girls, and they will add their thanks to mine."

"Do not talk of thanks," said Mrs. Walter with a pleasant smile. "We nearly lived off you the first weeks we were here, and you have been helping us ever since. We have plenty of flax so if your girls want cloth like this, we can furnish them the flax for the linen thread. We are not so well blessed with wool, or we would furnish that too. We really owe it to you."

"I shall think myself overpaid if you teach my girls to weave. It is something every woman should know. Here comes Jack, and we must be going. The girls will be tickled to hear the news, and if you can be of further use to you, let us know."

Mr. Walter followed Mrs. Reop's advice on doctoring old Bright, and in three days he was again chewing his cud.

Mr. McMahon, who lived a mile southeast of the the Walters, was the handy man of the neighborhood, and could "make a shift" as he called it, of doing many kinds of work. He tanned leather, distilled whiskey, made boots and shoes, cradles for cutting grain, scythe handles, rakes, sap pails, sap troughs, ox-yokes, sleighs and hand sleds, logs and barrels, ax-handles, "shakes" or split shingles for covering buildings, and with a little aid from Mr. Walter, even made a plow which was shod with thin iron and used on loose ground, somewhat as a cultivator now is. He was also a fair farmer, and an extra good man with a cradle in the harvest field. We shall have occasion to mention him again. Now that things seemed to be going so well, Mr. Walter wrote to an English friend of his in New York, and requested him to send him a pair of Berkshire hogs. These were to be crated and sent Rochester, thence by the Erie canal to Buffalo, thence by steamboat to Toledo, thence to Adrian, - there was a grain-buying station established there, and wagons going daily between that town and Toledo. The mail-carrier would notify Mr. Walter and he would get them from Adrian. These hogs were a great improvement over the native hogs.

The next winter Robert again taught school, and at the end of that term all the larger children of the neighborhood could read and write - - some quite well, some not so well.

The amount of cleared land in that region had greatly increased, and enough wheat was now raised so that harvesting and threshing were big jobs in which men, women and children all joined. The men swung the cradles, the women and larger girls helped the big boys bind the sheaves, and the younger children carried the sheaves into piles of about a dozen each, and at evening these were set up in shocks. Those who who could rake and bind as fast as the cradler could cut it, were accounted full hands. Putting up marsh hay was also one of the big of the settlers, now that they had more cattle. At first there was no clover or timothy sown, but after a few years these were regular crops.

Mr. Walter was now busy during the winter months at threshing wheat. This had to be done with a flail, and was slow work. He was an expert and because he did a thorough job and got all the wheat out of the straw, was never without a job. A poor hand at that work would waste enough wheat to amount to more than the wage of a good man. Because there were few trees on the prairies south and west of Orland, the farmers there quickly cleared large fields and raised a great deal of wheat. So it was in that region fifteen or twenty miles from home, that Mr. Walter worked much of the time in the winter.

NOTES OF INTEREST FROM

School records, Fremont township.

Sept. 1853

Whole number of children between five and 21	214
Number of males	117
Number of females	97

Number of schools	6	(male teachers	1)
Number of teachers	6	(female teachers	5)

Average wages -- male per month,	\$12.00
female, -- -- --	6.00

Length of school term, 3 months.

Branches taught;

Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography,
grammar, philosophy.

Amount of public fund of township	\$ 150.00
Valuation of township	\$62000.00

CHAPTER VII

Abe's turkey

It was a pleasant afternoon on the first of June 1840, and getting along toward sunset. Mr. Walter and Robert had gone to a raising, or a house building bee, west of Orland and were not expected home before dark. A and John had wanted to go along but their corn was not yet all planted, so they had to stay and finish that. Frances and Abe dropped the corn and Ann and John covered it. They finished about the middle of the afternoon, and Abe had started to hunt the cows for the evening milking. Robert had given his small rifle to Abe, and had bought a larger one for himself. Until lately Abe had been too short of ammunition to go hunting, but Mr. Roop had given him a horn of powder for dropping corn for him. John McMahon had given him a large chunk of lead, jokingly stipulating Abe should give him a quarter of the first deer he killed. So far the only game Abe had got was squirrels, ducks and pigeons but of these he had killed a goodly number. Rabbits were unknown in that section then. Supper was over and Ann and John were hoping Abe would soon return with the cows, as they had to do the milking. Presently Frances said "Here comes Mike Bowers" So it is" John responded "I thought he would go to the raising". "Hello, Mike", called Frances "what have you there?" "Hy, its a broom" she added as Mike came nearer. "Is that for me?"

"No" answered Mike, who was not much of a joker, "It is for AA Ann" "Well, I declare," exclaimed Ann as Mike presented her with the broom. "That is a really fine broom, Mike."

"It is not so bad" assented Mike. "The first one I made did not work out so well so I gave that one to Molly. She wanted this one but I told her it was too good for her. - not every hichory works out so well." "O, fudge, Mike you ought to give your sister the best one -" teased Frances, "I have a lot of flax to spin, and we finished planting corn today, so tomorrow I suppose I shall have to be spinning, and Ann will be weaving. She ought to weave you a linen handkerchief to pay for that broom." "I dont want any pay for it" protested Mike. "Are you finished planting corn?" John asked Mike.

"Just finished this forenoon. Thats why I couldnt go to the raising. Has Abe got the cows home yet?" "No" replied John, "he ought to be here before this"

"I saw him over by the tamarack a while ago, when I was getting our cows." said Mike. "He had a big turkey gobbler."

"Is that so" exclaimed Mrs. Walter. "then maybe you would better go to meet him, John." "He'll be along as fast as he can soon as he finds the cows" said Ann, "for he will be in a hurry to show us the turkey. I hear the cow-bell now and not far away".

"Hang a kettle of water over the fire, Ann, and you John, bring a couple of pails of water from the spring. Then you will be ready to do the milking." said Mrs. Walter.

"I will go and meet Abe" said Frances, as she started on a run toward the woods to the north of them. Near the woods she met the cows, coming almost on a run, behind them Abe, who, on seeing Frances, stopped and holding his hand behind his back, said "Guess what I've got?" "A bear" ventured Frances. "No" "turkey?" "Did that Mike Bowers tell you?" exclaimed the boy as he held up the gobbler, "I saw him just after I shot it and I see him up there by the house now."

"Yes, he did - let me carry it!" "No" replied Abe, "you may carry the gun." The gobbler was a large one, tho not very fat, which was to be expected at this season of the year.

"It will make a fine mess?" declared Mrs. Walter. "I shall dress it as soon as the water is hot, and we will have it for dinner tomorrow. Now Abe, get your supper, and John and Ann get at the milking."

"I will milk your cow, Ann" offered Mike.

"No, thank you, Replied Ann "she is a little particular, and does not like strangers." "But I am not a stranger!" protested Mike.

"Not to us" laughed Ann, "but you are to the cow."

"Then I'll talk to Abe while he eats supper" said Mike.

Charlotte now six, and Willie, four, came at Abe's call to see what he had. Abe held the turkey up, saying, "Big turkey! He was peeking down Abe's gun barrel to see what was in it. I was going to shoot his eye out, but I wanted him to see the bullet start so I shot him in the neck. He'll know better next time."

"Big turkey" repeated Charlotte admiringly, "Abe can shoot 'em!"

"You bet" said Abe, "when Abe's gun cracks, the squirrel drops!"

"Have you had supper, Mike?" asked Mrs. Walter. "Yes, an hour ago" replied Mike. "You shot the turkey thru the neck, Abe."

"Of course I did," answered Abe. "I didnt want to chase him around to find him, so I broke his neck." "Turkeys are not very plenty" observed Mike. "It is a wonder they are as plenty as they are." declared Mrs. Walter as she proceeded to scald and pick the turkey. "That with owls, hawks, weasels, coons, wolves, otters, and skunks, I do not see how any escape."

"And you have not said it all yet" added Mike "for I think the deep snow and lack of food has killed a good many, and the cold rains kill them when they are little."

"It does seem a miracle that any live thru the year" agreed Mrs. Walter. "I suppose it is partly because there are such uncounted thousands of pigeons, ducks, geese, prairie chickens, partridges squirrels and muskrats for the vermin to live on. They can only eat about so many so there are some left."

"There will not be so many varmints around here in a few years," declared Abe. "Mr. Roop is going to get the blacksmith to make me a dozen traps, and I can earn enough now to buy powder and lead, I have learned to shoot so I do not throw away many bullets."

"Abe, Abe, do not get boastful!" cautioned Mrs. Walter.

"I am not boasting" protested Abe, "but only telling the truth. When the first tracking snow comes, Mr. Roop is going to drive for me, and I am going to get a couple of deer."

"Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better" quoted his mother.

"You ought to have something bigger than that squirrel gun for deer" observed Mike "that gun only uses a buckshot for a bullet"

"A buckshot thru the heart will kill a deer as dead as a common ball would" asserted Abe. "And I intend to hit them where they live."

By this time Ann and John appeared with their pails of milk, Ann took it to the cellar and then washed the pails.

When she was done with this chore she joined the others in the yard. "Sing that song about Ellen the Fair," begged Mike. "Very well, if Frances will help, and you boys will join in on the chorus" agreed Ann.

While they were singing, Mr. Walter and Bob returned, and Mr. Walter exclaimed, "That sounds like Old England Mother and I used to sing that over there."

"Could you sing as well as Mike?" Frances asked demurely.

Mrs. Walter saved Mr. Walter from answering by exhibiting the dressed turkey. "Where's the head?" asked Bob.

"The dog ate it" replied Ann, "what did you want of it?"

"I wanted to see if it were blind" replied Bob.

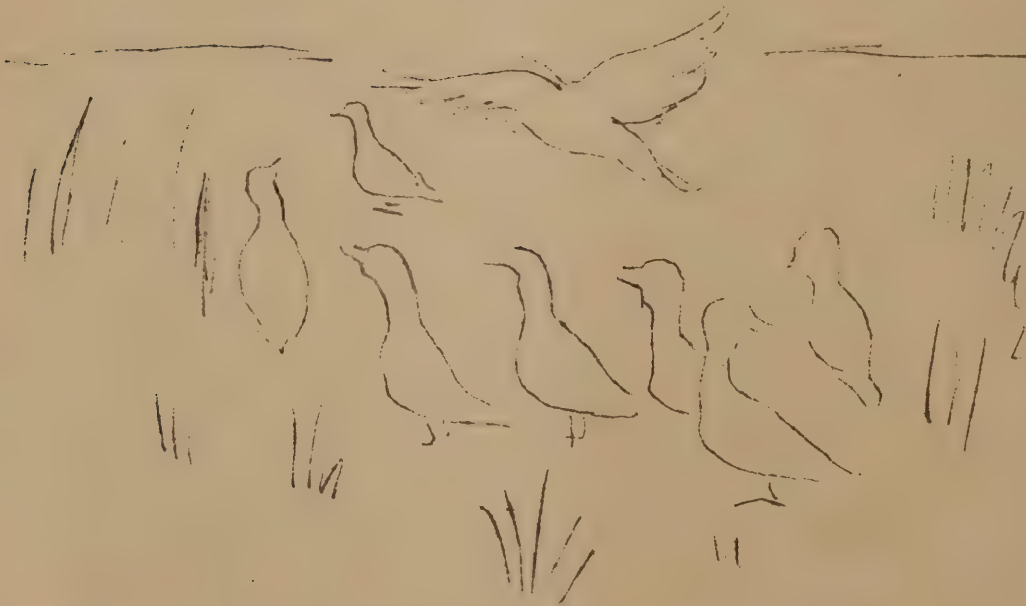
"Now sing Daisy Dean" urged Mike.

"Mother and I will help on that" declared Mr. Walter, "and then we will call it bedtime. For our English slogan is still a appropriate -

Early to bed and early to rise,

Work hard and economise.

"And if you don't get rich, you at least get tired." said Bob.



CHAPTER VIII

Hunting Deer

The summer passed with no outstanding evens for us to notice, and we will go forward to late November Of that year (1840) Hustle today, boys," warned Mr. Walter. "If I read the weather signs right, we will have snow before tomorrow and we can finish husking the corn today if we hustle." "You bet I'll hustle" said Abe to John as they started to the cornfield. "If it snows tonight I am going to hunt deer tomorrow."

"I would like to go too, but Father says we must go to Crooked Creek mill for cornmeal and buckwheat flour, as well as get some wood up and cut."

"If they will let me plan it, we can get all that done today, except going to mill, and that can wait a day. You see if I don't fix it with Father."

Mr. Walter had helped Robert yoke the oxen, and they came to the field with the wagon, for Robert was going to haul the corn as fast as it was husked and the wagon filled.

"Father" began Abe, "we are nearly out of wood, so why cannot Bob haul a load of wood while we get a little ahead of him? Mr. Roop wants me to go after deer with him, so if you will let me, I'll get Frances and Ann to help, and we will do two days work in one and have a hunt tomorrow."

"Well, that sounds good," agreed Mr. Walter, "and if we all work well I believe we can do it."

"Then I'll get the girls" said Abe, and away he ran. When he reached the house, he shouted,—"Ma, Father wants the girls to get out and help us finish. We can get done husking before dinner if you don't have it too early"

As they were running to the cornfield, Frances said "Tomorrow is the twenty-sixth, and Ann will be eighteen. Betsy and Jane Roop and Molly Bowers are coming over and Ma is going to have a birthday dinner." When John was told of the big dinner planned, he determined to have a little fun out of it. So after supper he went over and invited Mike to come to Ann's birthday dinner - an invitation Mike was not slow in accepting for he knew Mrs. Walter would give them a good feast, and if there was anything Mike loved more than he loved Ann, it was good feed and plenty of it.

John and Abe were up very early next morning, milked the cows and ate some luncheon, and then started for Mr. Roop's before daylight. They had no clock, but could make a good guess at time by the position of the stars, but this morning it was snowing a little and was very dark. When they arrived at Roops he was just getting up and told them it was just six o'clock. He inquired if the boys had had breakfast, saying he too would have some. "The girls will see to the chores. You didn't bring a gun, did you John?" continued Mr. Roop.

"No. Bob said he wanted his today, and Father traded the old fowling piece for an ox, down on English Prairie." "I am glad of it!" declared Mr. Roop "I never felt exactly safe when that gun was in the neighborhood. I have a double-barreled shotgun that we will load with buckshot, and you may take that. How much snow is there? You see I haven't been outside yet."

"Not more than an inch" John answered, "but it is snowing a little now." "That will be all right" announced Mr. Roop. "We can see them better, and will not make so much noise in walking. I was figuring on sending Abe over to the crossing north of the tamarac and you and I strike off northeast of here, and when we get over southeast of the tamarac, change our direction and go toward where Abe was waiting. If we are extra good hunters we may kill them all before they run away, and in that case Abe will not see anything on the runway."

"I'll take a chance" declared Abe.
"Well, go ahead then" said Mr. Roop. "Don't get buck-fever, and don't shoot until you know what you are shooting at, for John and I will be coming along after awhile. Now John you go over about half way to McMahons, then turn toward Mades, and I will go in about the same direction but about eighty rods west of you. If you see a track, follow it quietly and never mind me. And don't shoot at small game." "All right" answered John.

John had hardly reached the point where he was to turn north, when he heard the report of a gun a little northwest of him. Soon afterward he came upon the tracks of three deer that had come from the direction of the report and were headed east. He followed them to where they went into a small swamp but the brush was so thick that he circled around it, but found no tracks coming out. As he completed the circuit, he saw Mr. Roop following his tracks.

"They are in that swamp" said John eagerly, "did you shoot at them?"

"No and not the biggest one. If they haven't left this place they will likely stay here all day if no one scares them up. So let us go over and drive the swamp for Abe, and then we will all come back here. With one to drive, one to stand on the back track, and one on the runway ahead, we can maybe get one."

Meantime Abe was nearly to the runway where he was to wait. He saw neither deer nor tracks, but as that region was a noted haunt of deer he confidently expected to see some before long. He picked out a tree to stand behind, and to steady the gun against, for though he talked so confidently he was by no means sure his hand wouldn't tremble a little when the deer were at hand. He had hardly taken his place when he heard a dog barking off to the west of him. They had left their dogs at home, as they preferred to hunt deer without dogs to chase them. As the sound of the dog approached, Abe kept close watch, and soon saw a large buck coming at full speed. When it reached the rise of ground between the swamp and the marsh bordering the creek on the north of him, the buck stopped and stood looking back for his pursuer. On this rise of land there was very little brush and Abe could see the deer plainly. While it seemed a long shot for a small rifle, he saw it was likely his only chance, so, steadying his rifle against the tree and taking a careful aim just back of the shoulder, he fired. The buck gave a high

bound and disappeared in the willow brush fringing the marsh. Abe now had a chance to put in practice the instruction of Mr. Roop - "Always load your gun first of all." So he carefully loaded his rifle, then went down to where the deer had stood. By this time the dog was there too and followed the track into the brush. Abe followed the dog and soon came to the deer lying dead. He called the dog away from it, and ran back to his position on the runway, to wait for his partners.

After waiting about a half hour, a deer came by him so swiftly he could scarcely see what it was. He watched more closely after that, but saw nothing more until John and Mr. Roop came in sight. They were following the track of the deer that had passed. "Why didn't you shoot him spluttered John. "I was sure that would be the way of it. Were you asleep, or did you have buck-fever?"

"He was going on a dead run," remonstrated Abe. "No use shooting at him with a rifle. If I had your shotgun I would have shot at him anyway, but he was going too fast for me."

"You have to have some excuse," persisted John. "I doubt if you had shot him if he had stopped a rod away from you!"

"Don't scold the boy too hard, John," said Mr. Roop, "It is likely he had no good chance to shoot. I have great faith in the boy."

"Let him scold," said Abe disdainfully, "I'd get lonesome if and Bob were not all the time growling. But come down here John and let me show you something," and he led the way to where the dead buck lay. "Who killed that?" asked John.

"Who killed that?" exclaimed Abe. "Who do you suppose killed that I killed that!" "I didn't hear you shoot," answered John apologetically, "for he thought this was the deer he and Mr. Roop had been following."

"But he did shoot and hit him right or he would have gone farther than this," Mr. Roop said proudly, for he looked upon Abe as his pupil in woodcraft, having given him many lectures in that line. "Well, boys we have had great luck, getting two deer. So let's go home and get dinner, then come back with the oxen and sled to get our game."

John wanted to go back to the swamp where they had left the three deer, but Mr. Roop counselled that they first take care of what they already had. So they got the team, and first brought Abe's deer to his home, where they all had some of the birthday dinner which had been shared by a houseful of company. Peter-Grice and Sarah and their three children were there, and Mrs. Roop and her two girls, Kate and Polly Bowers, and a Mrs. Meade, who lived about a mile northeast. Mrs. McMahon and Mrs. Bowers had been invited, but were unable to come.

With such good luck hunting, and a big dinner, all felt gay. and Mr. Roop thought to tease Ann a little so said to her "Ann, you are a picture in that new dress, and all the boys will soon be fluttering around you like a flower garden. But

When they come, don't do as Jane did when I went to see her -- she coaxed me to stay as long as As I would, and then cried because I had to go home to do the morning chores. Finally her father got tired of it and said 'Jake, if you want that girl take her, and don't sit around here burning up all of my wood'. That was in a settled community and wood was not so plenty as it is here. "O, Jake, go on! You were

witted then, and the older you get, the less you know" retorted Mrs. Roop.

Mr. Roop and John now took home the deer Mr. Roop had killed, Mr. Roop saying, "You see, John, by the time we get this meat taken care of, it will be chore time."

Abe had remained at home to skin his deer then took a quarter of it to Mr. Mahonto pay for the lead. "Was joking a about pay for the lead," declared he. "I never thought you would get a deer this season, but I'll tell you what. I'll take this and you bring me the skin, and I'll tan it Injun fashion, and with the hair on and your mother can make you a coat of it. This is enough meat to pay for the and the tanning."

How perhaps you would like to know what sort of dinner marked the day when Ann was eighteen. They had no stove to aid in preparing the food, but depended on the Dutch Oven and fireplace. The oven was made of brick, stone and clay, and was heated by building a fire inside, and when it was hot enough, the fire and ashes swept out. The articles to be baked were put in and the door tightly closed. It did an excellent job of baking, and the victuals could be kept warm a long time. Its great drawback was that everything needed for the day had to go in at the same time. On this account it was made of a large size. In the winter it was not regularly used, most of the baking being done in the fireplace.

The day before the feast, the cornhusking was finished before noon, and Ann and Frances gathered a good supply of hickory bark and finely split wood, ready to heat the oven in the morning. Abe hunted ducks at the lake and got four. Mrs. Walter dressed a chicken to go with them, and she had saved the spare-ribs of a pig killed a couple of days previously. In the pan with the poultry and ribs was a dressing of bread seasoned with sage. In the morning while the oven was heating, Mrs. Walter made an English plum pudding, using dried wild plums for the fruit. This pudding was steamed in a 'steamer' placed over the kettle that hung in the fireplace.

Potatoes were peeled and cooked in the kettle then mashed. The day before, Mrs. Walter had made cookies and pumpkin pies, doughnuts, and cranberry sauce sweetened with honey -- for they now had several hives of bees and plenty of clean

honey. They had milk sweetened with maple sugar, for the pudding. Mrs. Walter also set on a dish of beans and a dish of sauce, made from wild crabapples, more to fill up the table than because she expected anyone to eat them. The oven was large enough to accommodate bisquits, ducks, chicken and spare ribs all at once, and the appetite Mike brought was fully as large as the oven, - so they say.

CHAPTER X

John learns shoe-making.

From this November 26, 1840, we will pass over the interval of time till April, 1842. In those eighteen months things have gone along in their accustomed groove. Father Walter was now fifty-two, Mother Walter fifty-four, Sarah twenty-three, Robert twenty-one, Ann nineteen, John nearly eighteen, Frances fifteen, Abe thirteen, Charlotte eight and William six.

The spring sun shines brightly on this April morning, and is rapidly melting the white frost on the lightly frozen ground. The prairie chickens are on their crowing grounds, and their too-hoo-hoos make a continuous refrain. Partridges are drumming in the woods, great flocks of blackbirds are singing and crows, robins, bluebirds, and song sparrows are joining in. As the sun rises higher, thousands of frogs in the marsh and at the lake add their voices to the general thanksgiving. Great flocks of pigeons, geese and ducks fill the air. Honey bees are seeking the sap of the maples and the blossoms of the willow; flies buzz about lively reminders of the summer that is nearly here. Woodpeckers drum on hollow limbs, a pair of sand-hill cranes flying at a great height sound their peculiar notes, mudhens are chugging in the marshes, and mingled with nature's harmony are the sounds of men shouting to their oxen, and the occasional report of a gun.

Father Walter and John were plowing in the second field east of the house, and Ann and Frances were trimming the young apple trees in the orchard east of the lake. There were over a hundred trees but having been set only three years the work of trimming them was easy. Abe was supposed to be helping them, but in reality was hunting prairie chickens and ducks and when he appeared in the orchard he had three ducks and two chickens. "I saw the biggest deer as I came down from the house," he exclaimed "he ran thru the brush at the edge of the marsh, where the brush was so thick I could hardly see him or I would have shot him - anyway he was going so fast a bullet could hardly catch him. He had horns that branched out as big as the top of that apple tree!"

"Hold on, Abe; warned Ann "how could he run so fast if he had such enormous horns and the brush was so thick?" "What was his business" replied Abe, unabashed. "Father told you to help us trim trees. You are a great help." said Frances sarcastically. "I know I am" replied Abe calmly. "If it wre not for me you ~~w~~ would go hungry. The sun says it is about ten oclock, so you girls take these birds to the house and cook them for dinner, and I will finish the trees."

"All right" agreed Ann "and let me take your gun, so you will not forget what you are to be doing." "Oh, take it. I am out of bullets, and the gun is not loaded."

Robert was working for a man on English Prairie and seldom came home. This left John as the main help of his father in the field, so after dinner that day, Mr. Walter told Abe he could help him plow, while John worked at building a fence along the north side of the field. The rails were piled along where the fence was to be built, and John was to lay them up. Some of the rails had large ends and required notching to make them fit well onto the fence, so John took his axe with him. Now John was as particular with his axe as Abe was with his rifle, so he kept it very sharp and always had a good handle.

He had been working only a short time when he found a rail tha needed trimming, and in hewing it into shape, his axe glanced and cut cleanly thru his boot and deeply into his foot - so deeply as to sever the extensor cords to the toes, and draw a gush of blood. There was no one near enough to help him at once. He whistled on his fingers a call that to Abe meant "help wanted" but feared he would not be heard, as his father and Abe were at the farther end of the field, and the wind was blowing from yheir directi n. Warm boys in those days carried no handkerchiefs and the only material at hand for a bandage, was his shirt, pans and socks. However he was getting to be something of a woodsman, and looking into the nearby woods soon saw a slippery-elm tree. He hobbled to it and peeled off several strips, then sat down and drew off his boot. Using the sock and bark he bound it up so as to stop most of the bleeding. Then ~~cu~~ cutting a sassafras stick, he made a crutch and started in the direction of the team carrying the boot and axe.

His father saw him coming and knew by the cut in the boot that wound was a severe one, so he unhocked the oxen from the pl w helped John to mount one and went to the house. There was no doctor nearer than Orland so Father Walter sent Abe over to get Mrs. Roop who was sort of a doctor and nurse combined. Mean- time Mrs. Walter with a view to stop the bleeding, wrapped a bandage so tightly above Johns ankle that it hurt him worse than the cut. It ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~terrible~~ ^{terrible}, as Mrs. Roop took it off as soon as she came. Removing the rough bandage, she made s smooth one from a strip of linen cut from a sheet, then fastened another bandage about the toes and back to the ankle, to keep the toes fr from dragging down.

"Now Bub," she said when this was done, "that is all I can do. If you keep quiet, it will be done bleeding in a short time and as everything seems to be clean, there is no better dressing than dried blood. If it does not seem to be getting along all right by day after tomorrow, we will unwrap it, or send for Dr. Joyce. If it is doing well, we will let well enough alone."

Mr. Walter felt relieved to see that Mrs. Roop had confidence in her ability to handle the case, but the next morning he determined to go to Orland to consult Dr. Joyce. Ann declared she could hold the plow if Abe would drive the team, and so Mr. Walter let them plow while he was gone. And he was gone the better part of the day, as Dr. Joyce was not at home, and he had to wait till late afternoon to see him.

The doctor thought it would not be necessary for him to go to see John, but would call the first time he was in that neighborhood. "But do not expect it will be solid in a short time", he warned. "Those cords grow together slowly, and should be used carefully for a long time. The boy will get nervous from idleness, and will want to be on his feet long before the foot is strong enough, so we must find something to keep him busy. After the first few days set him to knitting socks, braiding whiplashes or something like that."

So Mrs. Roop remained in charge of the case for the present, and declared John should pay her by knitting a pair of socks for Mr. Roop. A few days afterward John McMahon came to see him. "My boy tells me one of you boys has chopped his foot nearly off". "Not quite so bad as that" replied Mrs. Walter. "But the Doctor says he will not use it for a long time".

"Now is the time for him to learn to make boots and shoes," declared Mr. McMahon, "I am not going to last always and someone has to make boots. Want to try it, John?"

"Yes, if I knew how to begin", replied John.

"All right," announced Mr. McMahon, "I have my team and wagon outside, and I have leather and tools in the wagon, so give me a lift, Sis, and help me bring them in".

Frances went with him, and presently they returned with a large basket of leather, and a shoemaker's outfit.

"Now you may begin by making a pair of boots for me," said Mr. McMahon. "I have been making boots for others and now have none for myself except these old wornout ones. Now I'll show you how to measure my feet, then how to select the proper part of the skin for the several shoe parts, how to cut them out, how to make waxed thread, and how to peg on soles. We shall go over it every day until you learn. Then next winter you can help me in my shoe-shop enough to pay me for coming over here every afternoon for a couple of weeks."

"We shall be only too glad," cried Mrs. Walter, "and we can pay you some beside, I think."

So that is how John Walter learned to make and mend boots and shoes, braid whiplashes, and make himself useful about the house. The next year he carried a surveyor's chain for a Mr. Farnham, who surveyed a large tract of land in that region. In that way he learned much about measuring and describing land.

CHAPTER 10

How Abe Became a Doctor

It is May 1844 before we have anything more of special note to relate of the Walter family. At that time Ann was twenty-one, John nineteen, Frances seventeen,, Abe fifteen, Charlotte ten and Willie eight.

Mr. Walter had purchased nearly two hundred acres of land joining his farm on the northeast. On this was a field of sand well adapted to potatoes and garden. He had this small field cleared and plowed, but not quite all fenced. On the tenth of May, Abe and John were hauling rails and completing the fence, and had it done at suppertime.

"I will take the team home if you will bring the cows" said John to Abe. "I hear the bell east of us"

"All right" agreed Abe, starting in the direction of the bell.

Just after Abe left, Mike Bowers came along. He was after their cows, and stopped to talk to John. "From the sound of the bells," said John, "your cows and ours are together, and if you wait a little, Abe will bring them."

As the cattle came nearer to them they heard a bull bellowing angrily, and Abe yelling at him as if to excite him still more. "Abe better look out for that bull," exclaimed Mike. "he has chased me already, and that is why we never let the children go after the cows this spring"

As the cattle came into sight and Abe saw Mike, he could not resist the temptation to show off a little, for he knew Mike was afraid of the bull. So he ran up behind the bull and grabbed him by the tail. The bull whirled around, Abe lost his balance, and before he could recover, the bull was upon him. Mike and John quickly ran to him and with clubs and stones drove the bull away. Abe was unconscious and was bleeding freely from an ugly looking wound in the chest.

"O what will we do?" cried Mike "Shall I run for your father?#

"We haven't time," John replied briefly. "Grab a handful of those sassafras leaves, and lets see if we can stop this bleeding."

After covering the wound with a dozen layers of green leaves, John directed Mike to hold them down firmly while he made a bandage.

"What will you use for a bandage?" asked Mike.

"My shirt," John said as he drew it off, and with his knife proceeded to cut it into wide strips. With Mike's help he wrapped this bandage around Abe and tied it tightly.

"Now Mike, run down to your house and get some of your folks to come. It is only half as far as to our house. Tell Molly to run over and tell Father. Tell your folks to bring a sheet or blanket to lay him on."

"Is he dead?" asked Mike

"Of course not" asserted John, tho he by no means felt sure of it.

In less than a half-hour, Mr. Bowers and his wife and Mike returned. Mike carried an old musket and swore he would shoo the bull on sight. (Mike did shoot and kill the bull that same evening, not having sense enough, folks said, to wait till they had more time for butchering)

Mrs. Bowers said she had sent Molly for Mr. Walter, and her other girl for Mrs. Roop.

"How is he now ?" asked Mr. Bowers.

"I do not think he is bleeding much, but that is about all I can tell" John replied.

"Leave him quiet till his father comes" advised Mrs. Bowers. A few minutes afterward Abe opened his eyes, looked around and asked, "Where is that damned bull?"

"Glory be!" shouted Mike, "Abe is all right again!"

"Keep quiet, Abe," cautioned John. "You are hurt, and I am afraid if you move much you will start bleeding again. Father is coming and we have the wagon and will take you home."

"Not in that jolty wagon," declared Mrs. Bowers. "Have you an axe in the wagon?" When John replied that he did, she ordered Mike to run and get it. "Here are plenty of ~~s~~ sassafras poles; cut two about three yards long, and I'll show you how to carry a wounded soldier."

Mrs. Bowers took one of her linen sheets and fastened it to the poles with some of the strips of linen she had brought for bandages, and thus made a comfortable stretcher.

Mr. Walter soon arrived, with him came Frances. A few minutes after, Mrs. Roop arrived. She declared everything was done as well as could be. Frances took the wagon home, the four men and boys carried Abe. Mrs. Roop said her husband had ridden down to Robert's (who was now married and living on the Vistula Road, half way to Orland) Robert was to ride on to Orland to call Dr. Joyce.

Abe seemed conscious part of the time, but did not speak.

It was nearly sunset when they got him home and to bed. He was still bleeding a little, and they decided to leave the bandage as it was till the Doctor arrived.

It was about ten o'clock when Dr. Joyce came, and he brought his son, William with him. He was Abe's age, fifteen. The Doctor wished his son to learn his professoin, and the only school of medicine in the new country, was the school of experience.

The doctor removed the packing and emergency bandage that John had applied, and put a pad of tow and a strip of linen in it's place. He reported that two ribs were torn loose from the sternum. Had he been a novice he might have probed the wound to determine it's depth, but he had learned it is sometimes easier to induce hemorrhage than to check it, so the depth of the wound remained a mystery. Abe was now conscious, and drank a little water and ate a few spoonfuls of bread and milk.

"My boy William will stay with you tonight, and let me know how he is in the morning. He will come every ~~few~~ days for a few days, and I shall come again about the fourth day, or before that if he needs me."

The doctor's son and Abe became great friends before Abe was again able to walk about, and the doctor advised Abe to learn to be a doctor. Abe was willing, so he and William Joyce studied together under the old doctor's guidance, and eventually graduated in the school of experience. William Joyce became more interested in the growing knowledge of medicine, and went into the business as druggist. He did well and at his death left a large fortune to found a library at Orland.

Abe practiced medicine for years in connection with his farming for in a thinly settled country there was not enough doctoring to employ the full time of an active and ambitious man. He grew to be a very popular doctor, for his cheery presence was better than medicine; tho his learning must have been very limited, he was counted as very successful. While he knew but few medical remedies, he knew them well, and was a good observer - which is the foundation of a good and skilful physician. As he grew older, finding that the stories of his boyhood were interesting to his younger patients, he gave them stirring stories of shooting turkeys, deer, and even a panther. Of his fight with the bull - claiming he bit the bull's nose while he was goring him ! He told of nearly losing his life another time by a wounded buck; of an old fox that sprung his trap, using a stick. He claimed he outwitted her by breaking the stick in two, making it so short that when she tried again she was caught by the nose. These stories grew in proportion and variety, so that when Abe was an old man, many said they sent for him just to visit, and get cheered up. They considered his company worth all his fee; but Abe had a plenty of this worlds goods, and knowing by experience that it took a lot of work to get a little money, he never charged much.

It seems the path we follow in life depends as much upon ~~acc~~ accident as design. We mark out our course, aim for a special object, never thiking we will be diverted from it. Then Fate steps in, something happens which we call an accident, and we ~~are~~ crowded from the path to our object - only slightly and temporarily, we think at the time, but a slight change in direction may make much difference in the final destination.

Consider this great world: in traveling a thousand miles it deviates only twenty-eight feet from a straight line, yet in only six months it is going in an exactly opposite direction. On apparent trifles hang our destinies; if Abe had missed when he made a grab at the bull's tail, he would have missed becoming a doctor.

CHAPTER 11 An Unsolved Mystery

After harvest of the year of 1844 - the year Abe was hurt - John hired out to a Mr. Doty, who had lately moved to the neighborhood. He had bought an eighty acres that joined Mr. Walter's farm on the southwest. When John began work at Mr. Doty's, a young man who worked there was about to quit and go to where he said his home was, near Marshall, Michigan - some forty miles north. They shared the same bedroom, and he told John he was going to rise very early next morning to get an early start for home, as it would be a long walk. When John awoke in the morning, the young fellow was gone.

Mrs. Doty always had baked potatoes for breakfast. When she arose, she would scrape the ashes back on the hearth, roll in a pan of potatoes, then heap coals over them. In an hour or so they were ready for the table, and with a skillet of fried pork made up the morning meal. This suited John all right for he had an appetite that made anything eatable taste good, and Mrs. Doty always cooked a plenty.

Mr. Doty had a small field of corn, and when it was in shock he set John to hauling it to the barnyard, and setting it up against the fence. When it was all out of the field Mr. Doty had a husking-bee and dance, with free cider and music, for for all who helped with the husking.

John found it an agreeable place to work, but there were ~~st~~ stories about that this Doty was a thief with a record of two terms in the penitentiary. He was sometimes gone two or three days at a time, but John never inquired where he went and took little stock in the stories.

About this time Robert Walter helped a drover take some cattle to Marshall, Michigan, and when he came home reported that he had seen "Doty's fool" as the neighbors had called the man who had worked for Mr. Doty the year before.

The second year afterward, the bones and decayed clothing of a man were found in a tamarack swamp, near the Vistula road and a mile west of the Doty farm, and the find caused considerable excitement. Someone, recollecting that Mr. Doty was a mysterious person with an alleged prison record, voiced a suspicion that he had murdered the man known as Doty's fool; for upon inquiry at Marshall it was found that no one knew where he had gone, and even his folks, if he ever had any ~~th~~ there, seemed to have disappeared.

These amateur detectives theorized that Doty had murdered him for his money, overlooking the fact that he might have robbed him in his sleep and saved himself the trouble of pursuing him.

Identification of the remains was impossible, and Robert's testimony that he had seen Doty's Fool in Marshall some weeks after he had left Doty's employ, availed nothing. On looking up Doty's record, he had served two terms in the penitentiary as a professional thief.

He was tried in Fort Wayne for murder, found guilty and given a life sentence. Robert was so browbeaten by the Prosecutor that he was confused and his testimony went for nothing - tho the whole Walter family was convinced that Doty was innocent.

Nor did time ever clear up the mystery,

CHAPTER 12

Abe Buys A Coon Dog

About the time John was learning shoemaking, Molly Bowers married a young man, lately arrived from Ohio, by the name of James Critchfield. He was quite a contrast to most of the boys in the neighborhood, being rather reckless and noisy, and soon became a considerable user of Mr. McMahon's home-made whiskey.

Mr. Bowers had given Molly an eighty acres of land joining her father's homestead on the east, and the neighbors had a 'bee' and built the young couple a comfortable house. The next autumn after Abe was hurt, and when he was again hunting and fishing, he bought a dog from Critchfield that was highly recommended by his owner as a good coon-dog.

"Now we'll get some coon," said Abe to Peter McMahon. "Old Bose is getting too slow and gives the coon time to pick his tree, and the coon knows enough to pick one with a hole in it, so we have to cut the tree or hunt another coo. Our new dog is lively and I think the coon will go up the first tree he can get to."

"I have two pups that are old enough to hunt, and I would like to go out with you and take the pups so as to break them," answered Peter.

"I'll go with you most any night, but let's go without the pups the first night so we can see how the new dog works."

"All right, let's go tonight - there is a full moon and it promises to be a fine night." agreed Peter.

"Bring your shotgun and I will take my rifle, and each of us bring something to make a light by."

There was a black-ash swamp just north of Mr. Bowers' cornfield, and that was a great place for coon. So just at dusk Peter and Abe, with the new dog, started in that direction. Old Bose was left at home, much to his discontent, for he knew as well as anyone that the boys were going hunting.

The moon was full, the night somewhat cloudy and there was considerable brush in the woods they entered, making their progress slow except when the moon shone thru a rift in the clouds; so when they reached the cornfield Peter suggested they sit down on a log until they heard from the dog.



"There will be plenty of coons coming to get a feed of corn, and likely the dog will soon tree one," said Peter.

"All right, we'll wait here," agreed Abe.

They waited, alternately talking and listening, for a long time. At last, getting impatient, Abe rose and said, "I am going home, this is too cold a job. Seems queer there's nothing stirring."

Just then the moon shone out clearly and revealed the dog that was supposed to be hunting coons, lying quietly a few yards away.

"What are you doing here?" exclaimed Abe angrily. "Didn't I tell you to hunt 'em?" The dog, alarmed by Abe's scolding, walked a few feet farther away and stood looking at him.

"Looks as if you would have to bring him along when we try to educate my pups," laughed Peter. "I don't believe he ever saw a coon."

"Neither do I," agreed Abe, "That Jim Critchfield thinks he is smart to get a dollar for a dog that is not worth the powder it will take to kill him! We may as well go home and tomorrow night we'll take old Bose and this dog and your pups, and see if we can teach them. I'll get even with that Jim Critchfield if I live long enough."

The next evening was misty and dark, but good coon weather. Abe and Pete started out at dusk with the four dogs. John was invited to go with them, but said he was too tired to tramp thru the woods in the dark. Hesat by the fire cracking hickory-nuts and thinking it about time to cover the fire and go to bed, when Abe stamped in. He was dripping wet, and much out of temper.

"Pile on an armful of wood, then get to bed and let me borrow your clothes till mine get dry," he ordered. "I'll be likely to lend you my clothes!" retorted John. "What's the matter?" he asked, as he did build up the fire. Abe made no reply, but got the boot-jack and after some hard pulling, got the boots off, wrung out his socks, then got a towel and out of his other wet clothes and rubbed himself dry. He hung his clothes over a chair to dry, and his mother, who was in bed in the back room, offered to get up and make him a cup of ginger tea if he felt chilly.

"Chilly!" snorted Abe, "I'm red-hot inside and will be plenty warm outside as soon as I get dry"

Both John and his mother knew it was best to ask Abe no questions till Abe was in a different mood, so they left instructions for Abe to cover the fire well before going to bed.

Mr. Walter was threshing wheat on English Prairie and came home only once in a fortnight.

After breakfast next morning, Abe began to view his last night's adventure as a joke. He related, "We were hardly over to Bowers's corn field till Bose got a coon up a little black ash tree. The other dogs were with him and giving an occasional yelp, tho I don't believe our new dog knew what he was yelping at. "Just the thing!" said Pete -the tree is so small it can't be high, so you take a club and go up to club him off. I will stay with the pups and get them to nail him!"

So I got a club and went up. I found the top of the tree was dead, tho the bottom limbs were green. The tree stood out at the edge of the timber and was short and bushy. I was in hopes the coon would go out on one of the limbs, ready to jump pff, but I guess there were too many dogs below to suit himm, so he went up the dead trunk, far enough above where I was standing on a limb, so that I had to shin up the trunk a ways to reach the one he was on. I was just aiming a blow at him with my club, when the dry trunk broke off, and the coon and I both came down together. The lower branches broke our fall, or I think I would have broken my neck; as it was it was I wasn't hurt much, except there was about six inches of water where the tree stood and I rolled over in that. Pete didn't pay any attention to me, he was so busy watching his pups, and when we came down he hollered 'sic, sic' and Old Bose took the coon and the pups took me. One of them bit me on the leg and when I kicked them off I told Pete he could go to Guinea with his pups, but I was going home. The only good thing about it was that the dead tree top hit our new dog, and he ki-yied and ran off into the swamp, and I'll bet has gone back to Jim Critchfield's for I do not see him here. I notice Old B. Bose is in his kennel. The whole thing looks kind of funny now, but it lacked a lot of being funny when it happened!"

A couple of days later Abe met Jim Critchfield and jim told him his coon dog had returned, and that Abe could get him any time. Abe asked Jim if he had ever caught any coons with that dog, to which Jim soberly replied, "Never tried it."

"You said he was a good coon dog." insisted Abe

"And I supposed he was, for he was no good for anything else, and your father often says nothing was made in vain."

"Well, I'm not coming to claim him" retorted Abe angrily, "If tou get tired of keeping him, shoot him."

"O, I think with proper training he will soon learn to tree a coon!" returned Jim.

A couple of weeks later Peter McMahon came to the Walter homestead to get Abe and John to go spear-fishing. He had a bundle of hickory bark and they were just starting out for the lake when Mike Bowers and Jim Critchfield came on a like errand. They also had a good supply of bark for making a light. The Walter boys had a jack and spear, and Mike had brought a spear. "You have enough of a crowd without me," observed John. "I would rather stay home than slop around in this cold weather"

Peter and Abe dropped a little behind the others on the way to the lake, and Pete said "Now is the time to get even with Jim Critchfield! When we divide the fish we will put all the little ones in one pile, and you stand with your back to the piles of fish, and I'll call off, and the third pile if you will give to Jim. Be sure to remember, the third pile will be the culls" "I'll remember, and I think we can work it" agreed Abw "In order to make it seem all right, lets keep apart. Jim and I will srear together, and you and Mike"

So they made a fire in the jack, and when it was blazing well, started out. It promised to be a good night and they soon had a dozen fish of fair size, and when when Jim and Peter had held the spears for three jack-lights they exchanged places with Abe and Mike. While they were making the change, Jim took a drink from a bottle he had had in his pocket, and offered some to the others, but who had sense enough to refuse "A fellow is taking enough chances at this work without any help from whiskey to make him unsteady on his legs" declared Mike. Soon after Abe began spearing, he saw a big pickerel on his side of the boat and struck at his head. He only grazed it and the partly stunned fish circled the boat to Mike's side Mike, the slow of speech, was no slouch with a spear, and struck the fish thru the neck and brought him in. "That's a whale of a fish, Abe. I don't see how you could've missed him" exclaimed Peter.

"I didn't miss him. I didn't hit him just right."

"You knocked him sensible and made him easy for me!" said Mike

"Fill the jack again and we will move along" said Jim, taking another drink.

A little farther along Mike got a big dogfish and Abe got a bass. Before their time expired they each got several bluegill and then when it was time to exchange places again, they ran the boat toward shore until the bow touched bottom.

Peter stepped forward and began replenishing the supply of bark in the jack. Jim, taking another drink, rose from his seat and tried to pass Abe and Mike in the middle of the boat, but was so tipsy that he staggered and fell out into the shallow water. He got up and waded to shore, cursing Mike and Abe for crowding him out. The others decided to quit, pulled the boat on land and used the fire light to gather up the fish. Mike got Jim busy removing his boots and wringing out his socks, while Abe and Peter sorted the fish; in one pile was the pickerel, in one the bass and a few good bluegills, in in another the remainder of the good fish, and in the fourth pile the dogfish and several others too small to be of much account.

"Now get out where you cant see the fish, and I will point to a pile and say 'whose pile is this?' and you answer a name. Now Peter pointed to the pile of mostly bluegills and asked "whose pile is this?" Abe answered "Mike's" "And this?" asked Peter, pointing to the bass and bluegills.

"I'll take that" replied Abe.

"And this?" pointing to the worthless pile -

"Jim Critchfield's"

"And of course, I get the fourth pile" said Peter, picking up the pickerel.

"There is some shenanigan about this!" exclaimed Jim wrathfully, kicking his fish into the grass.

"Seemed to be all right," said Mike.

"Of course it was all right," responded Peter, "Abe couldn't see which pile I was pointing at, and if I had drawn the dogfish instead of the pickerel, you wouldn't have heard any squeal from me"

"Why didn't you put a lot of good fish in each pile?" demanded Jim.

"Why, there were only enough for threee good messes. If you had not upset our fishing we would soon have had enough for us all. But come, Jim, let's go home as fast as we can, or you will catch your death of cold," said Peter. This was clearly good advice, for Jim's teeth were already chattering.



In 1854, Abe, now twenty-five and a full-fledged country doctor (tho his time was mostly employed in farming) was visiting Mr. Roop one evening in early December, when Jane Roop, who was working for a woman not far away, but was home for the evening, asked Abe if he could cure fits. "Some kinds of fits are curable," replied Abe with due gravity. "Children sometimes have them from indigestion, and such cases yield readily to treatment. Epileptic fits are more serious, and while I could lie to you and say I could cure them, Dr. Joyce says he cannot do much for such patients, and you know that all I know of doctoring, I learned from Dr. Joyce. He says no sugar and plenty of fat in the diet seems to help some."

"Mrs. Bemis's ten-year old girl has a sort of spell when she is provoked, and sometimes screams and falls down and seems unconscious. I think she is just putting it on, and feel like giving her a swift kick, but Mrs. Bemis thinks Billy is really in danger at such times."

"He would be if I were her mother," interjected Mrs. Roop.

"If she has one of her fits when you and she are alone, you might try throwing a pail of water on her. That wouldn't be bad treatment for the real thing, and would be an excellent ~~re~~ remedy if she were shamming," said Abe.

"I think I shall advise Mrs. Bemis to consult with you," said Jane. "Of course I wouldn't talk that way to her mother, but would advise drawing a little blood from her arm, if she seemed in any danger," replied Abe.

"And tell her to give the girl a dose of salts or worm-medicine," added Mrs. Roop. "I think I know as much as you about doctoring children, Abe."

"More, likely. Anyway tell Mrs. Bemis to consult with your mother or me," said Abe to Jane.

"How do you like your new farm?" asked Jane.

"I think it will be a great farm when we get it cleared and some good buildings," answered Abe. "There is a lot of good mowing marsh on the south end of it, and plenty of level upland on the north. Mason had sixty acres of it pretty well cleared and it has been plowed twice. We aim to clear off ten acres a year for a few years and get rid of the stumps that remain on the older clearing. The timber is thin and small, compared with that in this neighborhood, but the land is productive."

"I know all about it," interrupted Mr. Roop. "I have hunted all over it a hundred times, and always thot it one of the best pieces of land near here. You and John have bought it together I understand."

"Yes, we aim to keep together till we gat it paid for."

"Not much game in this country now," said Mr. Roop regretfully. "If I could only get about a little better, I would be tempted to move west." "Talk about hunting!" exclaimed his wife, "Jake, you can hardly get to the barn, and the girls have to cut and haul the wood." "Well, I havent given up yet," retorted Mr. Roop. "If I could shoot a couple of times, it would brace me up, I think."

"I bought me a fine rifle the lasttime I took a load of wheat to Hillsdale," said Abe. "Regular Hanlius, twelve pounds, thirty-six inch barrel, thirty to the pound bullet. I can nip the head off a squirrel in the top of the tallest tree. Wish I had had it before the deer were gone! I wanted to bring it over to show to you, but I was going to stop at Fathers, and as this is Sunday he would be scandalized to see me carrying a gun. You know he never let us hunt on Sunday."

"I know," responded Mr. Roop, "and I used to think he was too strict; but when I see how prosperous he has been, and how every one of his children are a credit to him, I begin to think he was right."

"He has a dandy house now," said Mrs. Roop. "Fine rooms, all white ash floors, paneled doors, front porch, big cellar with a solid stone wall around it, brick chimney and everything. He tells Jake it didnt cost him so much, either."

"No, Father was not out much money," replied Abe. "He bought twelve big whitewood trees of Sam Markham for twenty-four dollars, we helped haul them to the mill, and the mill man sawed them for half the lumber, and the other half made Father plenty of lumber for his house. He got the ash off his own land, paid Joe Ride ten dollars to lay the cellar wall and ten more to do the plastering. Baum and Albright did the carpenter work for one hundred dollars, which seems cheap enough when they had to make the doors, the lath, the windows - in fact, everything."

"And they did a good job," exclaimed Jane, "All the floors are matched, and the inside work is good enough for a palace."

"And he has set out maple trees around it, and has peach, apple and plum trees and grape vines in his yard. In a few years it will be a garden of Eden."

"Only in the Garden of Eden they had no house," laughed Abe.

"I am glad Father and Mother have a good house. When we lived back by the woods we were crowded and the house was hard to keep clean. Then there were nine of us, and now they have a big house and only three to live in it. William will likely be going soon, for he is almost nineteen."

"He should stay with the old folks," declared Mr. Roop. "He should - but his father is sending him to Hillsdale College, and that is not the way to make a farmer of him. All a man should teach his boys is just enough to count notches on a stick. All they know more than that is a damage to them. Look at Pete McMahon - he was smart in books, but doesnt amount to much?" "He got too much of his learning around his fathers whiskey still," observed Mrs. Roop, "and how would we ever content ourselves, shut in as we are, without Betsy or Jane to read to us?"

"They ought to read to us," said Mr. Roop to Abe, with a chuckle. "For I maulled rails to pay for teaching them. Is for me, I never know B from a bull's foot, and it is a great wonderment to me to see your father just look at a book and speak it off just like he was talking to you."

"John is too given to reading," observed Abe. "He buys a new

book every year. I can't say I like to to read much - rather be stirring around."

John doesn't lack for stirring, either," declared Mrs. Loop. "There are not many who do as much work in a year."

"That's right," chimed in Mr. Loop. "I remember that when John was following me in the wheat and tying up all I was cutting

down, I thought I would show him how I could cradley, so I increase till I was again pretty good hickory, but he kept on without seeming to worry any, and I finally slowed down to my regular stride and gave up the idea of showing off. He was only sixteen then." "You spoke of John having some books," said Jane eagerly. "I wonder if I could borrow one, if I were careful of it?"

"I thank so," replied Abe. "I'll ask him, and bring one over for you."

"I thank you had as much to do with my learning to read at school, as the teacher did," continued Jane. "When I began school I could hardly read at all, and when you got up and read a lesson, I determined that I wouldn't let a little boy beat me. You were only eight years old then, as I remember. They say John's mind is quite a scholar."

"Yes, Abba taught school in our district. I dare say she would like to read, but she has so much to do in the house that she has no time. That with looking after the children, spinning, knitting, mending, making butter and cheese, looking after the chickens (for she raises a lot of chickens) she hardly has time to take a long breath. Part of the time she has a girl to help her, but mostly gets along alone. I've been out on a call and seen her candle burning as late as midnight. I like a worker, but she suits me too well."

"It's a woman is not busy all the time people call her lazy, but too close attention to business shortens life, I think," responded Mrs. Loop.

"If a fellow takes a little time off to hunt and fish, they call him a lazy tyke, and if he overworks and gets used up they call him a damned fool. You pay your money and take your choice," declared Mr. Loop.

"I went over to a turkey shoot in John Middleton's neighborhood just before Thanksgiving," said Abe. "They made a rule that no one was to get more than one turkey, so when I got mine I had to quit shooting at their target, but a man over by Coldwater wanted to shoot with me for the championship; so we got off by ourselves and he nailed a board to a tree and made a mark in the middle of it with a piece of coal, and was standing on a stand in about four rods away. I don't see how we are going to decide anything this way, I said."

"By no means," says he. "We can't miss at that distance, say I try a couple of shots, and if we shoot alike we will move the target farther away," said he.

"All right," I said, and took careful aim and drove the nail into the tree and the board dropped down. So he got another nail and betted me his turkey against mine that I couldn't do it again; but I did do it and he went home without a turkey. But I don't dare tell father, or he will give me Josse for betting. I couldn't get the Coldwater man to shoot after I had won his

turkey, and he couldn't coax me to shoot again, for I doubt I could have done as well the third time."

"I take great credit to myself for teaching you to shoot. I knew the first time I saw you handle a gun that you had it in you," declared Mr. Roop.

"Your father tells me that you, John and William are all taking a lot of interest in politics," said Jane, "and William has coaxed your father to take out naturalization papers, so now he is a citizen of this country."

"That is true," replied Abe. "They have done away with slavery in England, and Father thinks slavery is not only wrong, but is an injustice to the non-slaveholding whites of the south, for the white laborers have to compete with slave labor, and so cannot earn enough for a decent living"

"They have been quarreling over slavery ever since I was a boy, and the quarrel is all the time getting hotter", said Mr. Roop. "Probably if we were possessed of a lot of slaves, and looked upon them as property, we would be of the opinion that slavery was right, but if I lived in the south and had to work for my living, I do not think I would uphold it."

"I do not see what we are going to do about it, now that we have it," remarked Mrs. Roop.

"Nor do I see how we can change things in the slave states, but I am determined to do all I can to keep it out of the free states," responded Abe.

"Oh, it will never gain a foothold here," declared Jane

"Don't be too sure of it," retorted Abe. "If a slaveholder who is convinced that he has a right to a slave, same as you have to a horse, moves across the line into a free state and brings his slaves with him, just how are you going to force him to free his slaves or get out? Will the free state order out its militia? Not unless the governor of the free state is a radical and would risk a fight. Then many slaveholders are moving west into new territory, and there they find settlers from free states who object to the institution of slavery. That is where the real quarrel is. I do not think any one would be so foolish as to come into a settled free state and bring slaves with him."

"We always have had slavery, and always will have it, no doubt. I never have given it much thought," said Mr. Roop.

"What interests me more is the railway that is coming to Coldwater," said Abe "You know John and I worked on it down Chicago way a year ago, and they talk of having it connect with the Hillsdale-Toledo road next summer. Then our farm will be only fourteen miles from market, and will be worth twice what we paid for it."

"We shall soon have a town near here," observed Jane "There is now a pretty good store at Willow Prairie, though there is no market for wheat or livestock." "And they are surveying a line for a railway from Hillsdale to Fort Wayne. Willow Prairie or Brockville, as they are beginning to call it, will likely soon be a railway town."

"And your father will be rich with his three or four hundred acres near town." said Mrs. Rpop. "I thought he was foolish for buying so much, but his head was longer than mine."

"Where he was raised the land all belonged to the big-bugs and the little fellow couldn't own any, so when he got here I suppose he determined to get as much as he could while he was able to." Abe replied.

"His big orchard has been a good thing for his neighbors, for there were apples enough this fall for everyone. I suppose you and John got your share," remarked Jane.

"Yes, and all the rest of us. We went home and helped them make cider and apple-butter, and took a share of it, and a wagon load of apples home with us. Well, good-night, for I must be going."

"Come and see us oftener, Abe." urged Mr. Rpop.



The New House

CHAPTER XIV

Fremont

May Day, 1856, John Walter with his family drove over to his father's.

"Get in the wagon, Father, and go with us to Brockville. This is May first and Brockville's last day and Fremont's first, for today they change the name of the town. I am going to the house and ask Mother if she will go."

"No," replied Mother Walter with decision, "You can name the town without me. William asked me to go. He makes the christening speech. But tell Abba to leave the children with me. They will be too young to care about it and she will be tired to death before night if she has to look after them. They will be tired too, and here I can let them take a nap."

"If Fremont ever gets to be as large as the space they have incorporated, it will be a big town," observed Mr. Walter as they drove along.

"I do not think it will ever grow to that size," said John, "tho when the railway reaches here it may become a city. In two more years, they say, they will have trains running, tho some say it will be longer than that."

"William is all worked up over it. He has written a good speech - he read it to me last night. At the end of it he urges all citizens of the new town to vote for General Fremont next fall. He is quite taken up with the new political party," said Mr. Walter.

"So am I and so is Abe. Peter Grice will join it too, for he is anti-slavery, and the Republican party will be the only one that will come out square-toed for keeping slavery out of the Territories."

Mr. Walter continued, "William was in hopes the new party would advocate the freeing of the slaves, but I think the leaders of that party are playing the game right. It is like fighting fire in the forest - keep it from spreading and it will burn itself out. There are many who will vote against its extension, who would not vote for its abolition."

"I think we shall poll a million votes, and if so there will be a red-hot campaign four years from now," answered John.

When they arrived at Brockville (formerly Willow Prairie) everyone else within driving distance was there. The village; two stores, a hotel, post-office, church, schoolhouse, and two blacksmith shops was a great convenience for the settlers. They now hoped for the time the railway would do away with the long haul to get their grain to market.

William Walter, now twenty years of age had a pleasant voice and a good education, and had learned his speech well.

He declared that there was one thing about the coming election that seemed to him auspicious, and that was that he would be twenty-one in time to vote, as his birthday was October sixth. "I want to cast a vote for General Fremont, and hope every voter in this enterprising town will keep me company," he declared.

"You bet we will!" shouted several voices.

The farm John and Abe had bought joined their father's farm on the northeast, and the line dividing the two farms was the state line of Michigan and Indiana. So John and Abe voted in the little village of Kinderhook, four miles northwest of them. They both voted for General Fremont, but were much disappointed to find, when the votes were counted, that only one other Republican vote had been cast, tho probably a majority of the voters there would have preferred to see that party win. There were so many who considered it 'losing their vote' if they voted for a 'losing' candidate; John tried to explain that it was like losing the seed wheat that you scattered upon the ground in the fall - to harvest a crop the next year.

"From the three Republican votes today, I expect a plentiful harvest in four years," he said. "You have voted for something you do not want, and you will get plenty of it. When you vote, you have a chance to express your choice of candidates pledged to conduct the government in accord with their party's platform. If you vote contrary to your choice, you lose your opportunity to register your choice, and so lose your vote!"

CHAPTER 15

Harvest -

It was the beginning of wheat harvest 1859, and on the farm of John and Abe there were fifty acres of wheat and it was all summer-fallow wheat and a very good crop. The varieties of wheat at that time were not as early ripening as the improved varieties of later years, and harvest lasted all thru July.

"Abe" said John just after the Fourth, "I think we can begin cutting tomorrow. Suppose you drive over and see if you can get Jay Gould and Sant Allen to help us."

"I know we can, for I have talked with both of them and told them not to hire out to anyone else till they heard from us. If you say we will begin tomorrow, I will go and tell them. We could use a couple more if they are good ones."

"Father's wheat is always later than ours so I think William will change work with us," said John.

"I'll see them all" said Abe. "And we need a fourth man if William comes, so as to have three couples. I'll stop at Zale

Archer's and see if he is busy."

When Abe asked Zale if he could help them in harvest, he asked if they intended to hire any women, "because I never work in the harvest field with women", he added.

Abe asked "Why not? what's the matter with women?"

"Nothin', only this hot weather I can't endure breeches, and wear only a shirt and straw hat in the harvest field"

And it was so, for Zale went barefoot all summer and his feet were proof against stones and thistles, He wore a long linen that came to his knees, and discarded his pants when at active work. He was rather small and slim for a cradler, but claimed he had never found a man who could cut wheat faster than he could bind it.

All the able bodied men in town helped the farmers in harvest in those days. Carpenters, store-keepers, doctors, blacksmiths and preachers, and not a few women labored together at cutting (cradling) binding, shocking, hauling and stacking the wheat. The work was considered a duty, as all needed bread, and it was one of the few opportunities to earn good wages; for there was much work for a few weeks and they paid one dollar per day at that time. Tho many farmers had no ~~no~~ money, and the wages were not paid until the wheat was sold, or else were paid in wheat, which was counted as good as money. The work, tho hard, was interesting, for there was much company and better board than usual. Also there were contests and lively times where the fields were large enough to require much help.

About the middle of the forenoon on the seventh day of harvest at the Walter brothers farm, two men, strangers to Mrs. Walter, drove into the yard and asked if Jason Gould were ~~w~~ working there. She replied that he was cutting wheat in the field south of the house. They tied their team and went to the field. The men also were unknown to all in the field except Mr. Gould, who greeted one with "Hello, Sheriff! Looking for a job?"

"I have a job," replied the sheriff, "This is Mr. John Driver of Kentucky. He is looking for a runaway slave - by the name of Mose -. He has traced him as far as Waterloo, and figured he would likely pass thru Branch county, and so came to see me."

"And you didn't have any coon dogs, and came to see if I would take my dog and help you?"

"I have heard it hinted that you kept a station of the underground railway - and I warn you it is a dangerous business!" interjected Mr. Driver.

Mr. Gould paid no attention to Mr. Driver, but continued his conversation with the sheriff by asking, "Sam, how much reward is there for his capture?"

"Two hundred dollars!" answered Mr. Driver.

(from page 51)

"Sam, how much reward is there for his capture?"

"Two hundred dollars," answered Mr. Driver.

"How much is he worth when you get him home?"

"About a thousand."

"Is he any good in the harvest field?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Driver stiffly, for he resented Mr. Gould's manner.

"Then if we are so fortunate as to find him, we will set him to work to pay his board till you can come to get him. It is possible he will get homesick and come home of his own free will, when he finds what a lot of rascals there are in the north."

"But Jason," protested the sheriff, "We can't be put off this way. We have authority to search your premises, and if he is found there and you have been hiding him, it will make you trouble."

"Then I hope you will not find him there," replied Jason.

Mr. Driver exclaimed angrily, "Your defiant attitude makes it appear that you are a sympathizer with such criminals, and stand ready to help them; and you deserve to be severely dealt with;"

"Mister," retorted Mr. Gould, stepping in front of Mr. Driver, "do you think I would be fool enough to give up a man worth a thousand dollars if I had him? Why in hell did he run away, if you used him right?"

"Is that any of your affair?" asked Mr. Driver.

"No, I just asked out of curiosity; And furthermore, it is none of my business to help find him. Go ahead, Sam and search my premises if it amuses you. Come on, Zale, this wheat will not cut itself, and as these gentlemen have taken a little of our time and are so eager to show their respect for righteousness, perhaps when they are done searching for Mose they will return and help us a little."

"I am afraid you will be getting into trouble if you go to mixing in this underground railway business," cautioned Zale after the sheriff had gone.

"When you hear evil spoken of your neighbors, don't be too ready to believe it," answered Jason. "You know I think no man can be a slave in a free state, so if Mose is in Michigan I think he is a free man and that it is kidnapping to capture him. As for trouble, I was brought up on it, and when I have been tinkering around the shop a few days (he was a blacksmith making grub-axes and sharpening plow-shares, I welcome the job of shoeing a lively horse! Here come John's boys with our lunch."

They had begun work at sunrise and their breakfast was eaten at 4 A.M. so about nine a lunch was brought to the field. Then they had supper at five and worked till dark, with a bed-time lunch for any who cared to eat it.

On the last day of cutting wheat on the Walter brothers farm, Abe said, at the dinner table; John and I will help William cut his wheat next week, but it is not quite ready tomorrow, so I want all to go with me tomorrow to harvest Mr. Roop's crop. We can finish it in one day, and he cannot get out to do much himself. He was pretty good to me when I was small and I would like to show him that I remember it. Give and it shall be given to you, one of Father's favorite texts. William can go tonight and tell them to expect us tomorrow."

"Are you figuring on helping old man Ent, Abe?" inquired Sant with a wink at John.

"He has plenty of help of his own," replied Abe.

"Yes, three big boys, but only one girl at home and they say Abe is trying to steal her," laughed Sant.

"That would be the worst kind of stealing. If Ent and his boys are left alone, one of them will have to hunt a wife," added Zale Archer.

"I notice Sile Ent goes fishing quite often, and sometimes does not stop at the lake, but paddles across to the south shore and seems to find an attraction at Dobson's," said John.

"Single women are getting scarce in this country, and if I wanted a wife I wouldn't let any grass grow under my feet, Abe," warned Sant. "Banj Dobson has captured your sister Frances, and Ed Wylington has Ann, and by the look of things Charlotte will soon be claimed by Jack White -"

"Charlotte and Jack were married last week," interrupted John. "Father didn't fancy Jack, but now he has given Charlott part of his farm."

"He did that so Charlotte would be near home where she could help Mother," said William.

"Jason," said John's wife to Mr. Gould, for she saw that Abe would prefer to change the subject of conversation, "who were those men that came to see you?"

"One was a stranger from the South, who had lost some property. The other was our sheriff from Coldwater."

"They were hunting a runaway slave," explained John, noting his wife's puzzled look.

"I hope they don't find him!" she exclaimed.

"Tut, tut," said Jason with a smile "You wouldn't want to see the poor man lose his property, would you? Suppose one of your horses strayed away and came down to my place, do you think I would hide it? and if I did, would I be doing right?"

"If a stranger's horse came to you, and you shut it up, you would naturally ask anyone who claimed it to prove his ownership, and no one can own slaves in Michigan!" countered John's wife.

"A very good point" declared Mr. Gould. "I shall remember that if Mose ever gets into my possession."

"Do you really know anything about the man they were hunting?"

"Yes, I think I do," Mr. Gould replied "His name is Mose, he is colored, he is from Kentucky, was last seen in Waterloo; he is worth a thousand dollars (that is twice as much as I am worth) he is a good hand in the harvest field, and there is a reward of two hundred dollars for his capture. Also he is supposed to be on his way to Canada, supposed to be opposed to returning to Kentucky, and supposed to hoping to find friends to help him on his way."

When Mr. Gould came to dinner he brought his cradle-scythe with him, and afterward asked William to turn the grindstone for him, to sharpen it. So these two went to the grindstone, leaving the others to lie in the shade near the house.

"You must be well acquainted in Hillsdale" began Mr. Gould, "Do you know a man named Charles Lawyer - lives not far from the College?"

"I know where he lives, but am not acquainted with him. He is an old man, that is about all I know about him."

"How shall we manage to help Mose if we run across him?"

"They will be keeping close watch of everyone they suspect of keeping stations for fugitives," said William, "so if I wanted to make a sure thing of it, I would counsel him to hide away in a safe place for two or three weeks and by that time the trail will get cold. I have a place where a half-dozen could hide for a month and my own folks would not suspect it. If you ever need to use it, and its secret goes no farther than you and I, it is ready."

"Good. Tho I know nothing of Mose more than the men seeking him just now, there is a chance he will be brought to my station, perhaps tonight - and I dare not keep him now I am suspected, but I could bring him to you."

"That would not suit me so well. I'll stay with you tonight and will take the fugitive if he comes, and even you will not know where he is."

"That will be just the checker?" declared Jason.

But the best laid schemes of men are sometimes not needed, and William was never called upon to shelter Mose, and if Mr. Gould had further knowledge of him, he kept it to himself.



CHAPTER XVI

A Western Trip

Among the neighbors who gathered to harvest Mr. Roop's wheat the next day after John and Abe finished cutting, was a Mr. Martin, who had bought an eighty a half-mile south of Rppp. He had newly arrived from Ohio and was a stranger to John and Abe, tho he and William had become well acquainted, for he was one of that class that form acquaintance quickly and easily. He was an excellent hand in the harvest field, but from the appearance of his farm, was a man who could work better for others than himself. He claimed to be a professional trapper, and was a great story-teller, and probably the source of many of the tales that Abe related in later life. To him Indiana was gattting to be a state whose prime was passed, and he cast longing eyes on the prairies of Iowa. Like Mr. Roop, he wanted to be where there was good hunting and trapping, and few restrictions of private ownership. There seemed to be many of his kind farther east, for now hardly a day passed but some emigrant wagon rumbled thru Fremont, headed toward Chicago 'and points west'.

But Mrs. Martin had become tired of moving, and put her foot down, declaring that Joe had moved a score of times since they were married, and if he went to Iowa he would go without her. So Mr. Martin determined that as he could not move, he would go west on a trapping expedition. His horses were ~~to~~ too old for such a journey, so he looked about for a partner who could furnish a team, and to this end he set about to enlist William Walter. William soon fell for the seductive ~~sto~~ stories of profitable fields for a trapper in Iowa, but Father Walter was less sanguine and declined to furnish William with a team, so he turned to his brothers John and Abe. Abe owned a team of driving ponies, good travelers but too small for a loaded wagon. John had a good team of cream colored mares, classed as big, tho they weighed only twelve hundred each; for there were no really large horses in Indiana then. The average farm horse of today is fully a half heavier than those of a hundred years ago. A good part of the farm work was still done with oxen.

After considering for a month, John decided to take his team and with Abe, Mr. Martin and William, go to Iowa after the ~~wn~~ wheat was sown next fall. There were now machines to thresh wheat so that job was shortened. By rushing the work as much as possible, they had the wheat sown and were ready to start about the middle of September. The roads were good and they had a very light load, and set their pace at thirty miles a day. Emigrant wagons were mostly heavily loaded and they passed many of them on the way. As they had few traps, they stopped at Chicago to buy more, at a shop where traps were ~~ma~~ made to order, which took two days.

Mr. Martin was the leader of the party, and a good leader he proved to be, and they made the trip with little expense. From Chicago west, they found the principal topic of conversation was the civil war in Kansas, over the question of whether Kansa was to be a free or a slave state. Some of the emigrants they talked to were on the way to Kansas, for an organization of Free-Soilers were trying to get sufficient numbers of settlers from the northern states to settle there, who would out-
vote the pro-slavery men coming in thru Missouri.

settlers from the northern states to settle there , who would out-vote the pro-slavery men coming in thru Missouri. These rival factions were offering great inducements in the way of ~~fr~~ free farms and help to get established, tho it was known fighting was going on over the slavery question, only the bold-er spirits were going beyond Iowa.

On the third day after entering Iowa they overtook a big 'prairie schooner' whose crew consisted of two big families. Their team was none too good, and several were walking to ease ~~the~~ the load. Mr. Martin suggested to John that they invite some of the pedestrians to ride with them to about where they would likely camp, for it would soon be evening. "Maybe we can get a few ideas and the roads are level and your team will never know the difference." AS John drew up and asked one of the men if they would like to ride, one of them replied,

"What I want worse than a ride is to know how far it is to the next town. At the last house we passed, they were newcomers and didn't know anything of the country west of them."

"We are strangers here, too" responded John, "and are intending ~~to~~ to camp four or five miles farther on, unless we come to a stream meantime."

"We do not need to get to a stream until tomorrow, for we carry enough water to give the horses a drink; but I want to find where I can get a doctor, is why I am in a hurry to get to a town."

"You are in luck, Mister," said Mr. Martin, "for we have a ~~d~~ doctor with us; this is Dr. Walter," indicating Abe.

"My wife and child were taken sick this forenoon and seem to be growing worse. We have some common remedies, but they do not seem to work. Would you take a look at the sick ones?"

"certainly, certainly," replied Abe, as he went to the covered ~~wa~~ wagon. He was gone a half-hour and when he returned to his par-tners said, "They are seriously sick, and I think I should stay with them tonight."

"I have been looking at that timber ahead," said Mr. Martin, and I think it will be a good camping ground. It is only a few miles away - can they travel that far?"

"Yes. You girls and boys climb into our wagon and I'll walk a while. Go ahead and be fixing camp," said Abe.

In an hour the travelers gained a small rise in the ground, from which they could see a small river, and a house near it, where the road came down to it.

John and his companions had already turned the horses out to graze, and were preparing supper. The settler came up from his house to greet them with, "Howdy, strangers. Make yourselves at home. I am running a little store and will be glad to do business with you. Where are you bound?"

"We are intending to trap a little, and will stop most anywhere," answered Mr. Martin. "This country looks good, if you have not caught everything in reach."

"I don't trap, but there have been some here lately, hunting and trapping, but they have moved on. I have an idea that if you moved up the river a few miles you might strike something. If you decide to stay around here a while, I can furnish you a shed for your horses if you will help me put it up. I have the poles cut and on the ground."

"We'll be glad to help if we conclude to stop." Mr. Martin answered. Just then the settler in the covered wagon drove up, and the man turned and asked what he could do for them.

"If you can furnish a sick woman and child with a bed, we will be much obliged to you." said the leader.

"Sure, sure. I'll go and tell my wife to get things ready, and you can drive your wagon right up by the house, and do a little cooking on our stove."

"As this seems to be a good place to stay, I think you would be wise to wait here till your sick folks are better," suggested Abe to the leader of the emigrants. The settler inquired of him, where they were going. He replied, "Kansas. I cannot tell you exactly what part, but I expect to meet a man soon who will direct me."

"Ha! I see. You are off the road a little but I will put you right. After supper I will ride over to the Smith Settlement and get the man you want to see. Meantime my wike will get you some milk to add to your supper, and if you lack flour, meat or meal, I have plenty."

A half hour later the settler saddled his horse and rode away to the south. In about three hours he returned, and early next morning a man rode up and had a conference with the Emigrant. Abe listened to their talk with much interest.

"From what place are you?" asked the man whom we shall call the Agent. "Defiance, Ohio." The Agent consulted a little book and said; "Then you are Mr. Jordan?" "Yes."

"And with you are your brother-in-law, Mr. Hees and his two girls. You have two sons, nearly young men, and of course your wives and small children are with you. That right?"

"Exactly right. Then you are doubtless the man I was told would show me the way. But I see I am off the road. How do I get bach? My wife and child are sick and the doctor advises me to stop here till they are better."

"That is good advice. I am amking up a company at the Smith Settlement about eight or ten miles from here. I would like to get a good number of you folks together, and will furnish you with a guide, and anything else you need."

"Thanks. We are pretty well provided, bue our team will be better for the rest."

"Mr. Corey here, has plenty of corn, so give the horses a feed - not too much if they are not used to it. Furnish him anything he wants, Jerry, and I'll settle the bill. Let him have a few bushels of corn to feed on the way. I'll come over and let you know when the caravan is ready to start. Now I must see these trappers"- "from what section are you?" he now asked of Mr. Martin.

"Indiana - northeast corner."

"Why not come on to Kansas with these people I am getting together? We will give you all the land you want, help you put up a house, and what you need to live till you harvest a crop. Also we provide you with a guide and provisions on the way."

"When you do so much for these emigrants you naturally expect something in return. What is it?"

"No secret about that," replied the Agent pleasantly, "the pro-slavery men are trying to make Kansas a slavery state, so an organization of anti-slavery men are trying to induce northern men to move in in such numbers as to control the state."

"Then if we go there you might want us to do a little fighting?"

"We are not intending to start a fight, but some of the ruffians the slaveholders are bringing in to the state have been plundering and burning for months, and we do intend to defend ourselves from such outlaws."

"If we were free to go, I dare say all four of us would be with you. But we are men of family, and will be here a few weeks only, and will return to Indiana before Winter sets in."

"When you get home try to send us as many reliable men as you can. Once a reign of law is established, Kansas will be an ideal place for a man who is willing to work. The climate is just right, the land fertile, no forests to clear before you can start to plow, and no hills to bother. It seems it will be close to market, for the Missouri river towns are not far away, and railways are being built west from them. Now is the time to go there before all the land is taken."

"Almost thou persuadest me!" exclaimed William.

"But William," said John earnestly, "you can't leave Father"

"I could if Jack White and Charlotte would run the farm," answered William.

"But Jack already talks of moving west," said Abe. "If someone would offer him half what the land Father gave him, is worth, he would move in a minute."

"If he moves, try to head him our way," said the Agent. "If he gets to this place, he will find someone to show him the way."

After the Agent had departed, Abe said "If someone tells this to Jack White, he will be in Kansas in six months."

"And I shall tell him," declared William, "for he is just a hindrance to Father, and will never amount to anything till he gets where he must depend upon himself."

"We may as well be exploring this stream," said Mr. Martin. Two go upstream and two down. John and Abe take your choice and Billy and I will take the other."

"I'll stay with this Jerry Corey and leave my team here today. If there is enough to pay to stop here I will help him make a stable." said John.

"I do not feel I should leave my patients at present, so let William and Mr. Martin look the ground over today, and maybe we will set traps this afternoon or tomorrow." said Abe.

The creek, a branch of the Cadar river, was only a small stream at present, tho in the spring it was quite a river, Mr. Corey told them. He had a small boat which he offered to lend them, as the creek was too large to cross easily without one, tho there was a ford near Corey's house where the creek was wide and shallow where the wagons crossed. After examining the stream both directions, Mr. Martin thought they could do well there.

Meantime John and Abe had seen Mr. Corey's cornfield and were astonished to see what a crop he had raised on sod plowed the previous fall, without any culture whatever. They helped him husk a few of the shocks he had cut, to have the stalks to cover a stable. They helped him set posts for the framework of a shed, which was later covered with bundles of cornstalks. In the spare time of the next few days John made a similar shed for his team and wagon.

They trapped about a month in that section of country, then John took what fur they had and started home. His three companions decided to move up the stream a few miles and if they had good luck, remain a few weeks longer and hire a team to take them to the nearest railway and return home by rail.

While they had their headquarters at Corey's news came of John Brown's capture of the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry. The Agent from Smith's Settlement brought the news. He was much excited and commented, "Now all hell will be to pay! The civil war going on in Kansas will spread all over the country! There is bound to be a showdown."

For his trip home, John bought a dry-goods box for carrying the furs, and a few bushels of corn, to feed his team on the way and to show the folks at home, as they might find it hard to believe his story of a big crop raised with so little labor.

He had four hundred dollars worth of fur in his box, and had some fear of thieves, but judged the safest way was to pay a little attention to the box, and leave it in the wagon at night as tho it were of no great value.

The leading topic of conversation, where-ever he stopped, was of John Brown's raid. The South, the newspapers said, were even more excited than the North.

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John would have liked to sell out and move to Iowa. He had no wish to take his family into the civil war in Kansas but was very favorably impressed with Iowa. His wife, however was determined to stay where she was. So John remained for the time being where he was, tho afterward he moved north and with his brother William, ran a saw-mill in the pine woods.

Mr. Martin, Abe and William returned home about Dec. 1. They brought with them nearly as much fur as John had brought, and promised themselves another trip the next autumn.

But before that time came all such projects were nearly forgotten in the turmoil and exciting activities of the coming political campaign.

CHAPTER XVII
1860 - Mr. Walter Studies Politics

Even before the trappers started west in 1859, a state campaign was going on in Ohio, and the Republicans of that state had induced Abraham Lincoln, a rising statesman, to come to Ohio and make two speeches. His reputation was still only of being a skilful debater, but in the speeches - at Columbus, and Cincinnati, - he predicted the speedy triumph of his party and explained what their policy would be when in power.

The Walter boys had heard much of Lincoln while west and read his speeches with great interest, and in the winter of 1859-60 the discussion of political affairs gradually drew Father Walter into the group of the party that wished that party to declare for the abolition of slavery.

Lincoln, however, was not advocating that move, and wished to quiet the nation by a definite promise to not interfere with slavery in the slave states, but to keep it out of new territory. This stand brought opposition from both sides. Still if a choice must be made, the abolition forces saw that the Republican party was preferable to the party favoring the extension of slavery. There were not enough Abolitionists to make a strong party, so many of that persuasion indorsed the Republican platform and voted that ticket.

As Abe had predicted, Jack White had sold out and moved to Kansas, and Charlotte's letters to her parents told of the clashes there between the pro- and anti-slavery factions, and confirmed Father Walter in his political beliefs. He too believed Lincoln's prophecy that the country would become all slave territory unless those opposed to it showed a united front, and resolutely fought against its extension.

While William was trapping, Mr. Walter had hired a neighbor boy to do chores. He stayed at the Walter homestead all winter and went to school in the little schoolhouse on the corner of the farm. The school was taught that winter by Charles White, a young man who lived with his parents near Mr. Roop's place. They were from Scotland and Mr. White had been a boiler maker by trade. But as land was cheap, he decided to try farming. They were new arrivals but William quickly became a close friend with the young schoolmaster. William, much excited over politics, soon infected Charlie, and they were both ready to fight for their beliefs. William tried, and succeeded fairly well, at speechmaking, but it was quite plain that they were echoes of the Lincoln speeches he had read with so much interest. He had subscribed for the New York Tribune, and purchased a copy of Helper's Impending Crisis of the South, Both he and Father Walter read them eagerly and William's speeches were based on them. As Mr. Walter said, "Abe stirs up Helper, Abe Lincoln, and Horace Greeley all in one, and makes a good broth"

One evening in early March, 1860, William called upon Mr. Whit's family, with the copy of the latest Tribune in his pocket, to discuss with the schoolmaster Lincoln's latest speech, at the Cooper Institute. William said, "I certainly admire this speech of Lincoln's and wish I could make one like it. While Father and I feel we are really for abolition, since Lincoln is not for disturbing slavery in the slave states, but says he thinks this country cannot endure half slave and half free, we do heartily endorse him."

"There will be a fight over it," said Mr. White, a quiet man who seldom spoke.

"It will not last long," declared William confidently.

Mrs. White, a well read woman, especially of history, replied, "That will much depend upon whether the fighting is done in the north, or the south. This is a big country and only partly settled, and the difficulty of carrying on a war in a distant part will be great. Scotland is small in comparison, but in the time of Wallace and Bruce, King Edward, tho he had ten times the resources of Scotland, didn't succeed so well."

"Yes," objected William, who was overflowing with Helper's statistics, "but there are only about three hundred fifty thousand slaveholders in the South, and more than ten times that number non-slaveholding whites who would be better off if slavery were abolished!"

"No doubt, no doubt," agreed Mr. White. "But you'll see the class that's ruled the south, aye, and the north too, will rule the south still."

"The slaveholders control the press of the South, and so will feed the poor whites on lies, tho I understand very few of them can read at all," remarked young Charlie.

CHAPTER XVIII William as a Soldier

On May 16, 1860, the Republican National Convention met in Chicago, and on the 18th nominated Abraham Lincoln for President, much to the satisfaction of Father Walter and his sons. From this time to election day, Nov. 6, 1860, William was so engrossed in politics that his father threatened to rent his farm to Mr. Albright, who now lived a half-mile north. William urged him to do so, and engaged to teach school in the district where John and Abe resided.

Young Charlie White was again the teacher at the Walter school.

In that eventful winter the Civil war began, and before Lincoln was inaugurated, the South was in arms.

On the 15th of April, 1861, Lincoln made his first call for troops, and William was the first to enlist in Fremont. Young Charlie White also wished to go but his parents dissuaded him, but promised that they would allow him to go if there were another call. Many thought, (William and his parents among them) that when the southerners saw that they were no longer in control of the government they would back down. Mrs. White was not of that opinion, tho even she thought the south could not hope to successfully oppose the north, and hoped the non-slaveholding whites would desert the slaveholders.

Less than three weeks after William enlisted came a second call for troops, and Charlie White declared he was going. As he was only seventeen his parents tried to persuade him to remain at home a little longer, but he was determined to go. So his father said he was going with him, to help take care of him, for he was his only son! In two more months Congress directed the President to issue a call for five hundred thousand men and William, Mr. White and Charlie soon had plenty of company. As the three of them had enlisted so near the same time, they were placed in the same company, under the command of a young man from Orland.

Whenever a letter arrived from William, Mrs. Walter always hastened to tell Mrs. White, and when one came from young Charlie, Mrs. White was as prompt to bring it to Mrs. Walter; as the young men both wrote as often as they had opportunity, their mothers became intimate friends. Mr. White never wrote, as he said Charlie wrote for both.

Charlie's first letter described the shooting of Colonel Ellsworth, a young volunteer from Chicago. He was killed in Alexandria, not in battle, but by a Rebel sympathizer.

For several weeks letters came frequently. Then several weeks elapsed with no news of them. Then a letter from their Captain to his mother in Orland reported that Mr. White, Charlie, William, and a few others had been on a scouting expedition, and had not returned. Whether there had been a fight, he was unable to say. He believed they had been captured. His mother came at once to report to Mrs. Walter and Mrs. White.

Shortly after New Years, 1862 the anxiety of the mothers was somewhat relieved by the return home of William on a sixty day furlough. He was in poor health but declared he would be all right in much less than sixty days, now he could visit his mother's cupboard several times a day. He and Mrs. Walter at once called upon Mrs. White to report.

"Just the last days of August," he began, "we were sent out to explore the country ahead of us, and went ahead of the army for several miles. We saw no enemy and not much else, for it was a miserable, God-forsaken section, with scattered farms with a few negroes on them, and much swamp and forest. Along toward evening we stopped at a farmhouse and asked for something to eat, and a few minutes later the house was surrounded by a large company of Rebs and it was surrender or be shot. They tied us to our horses and tied them to some of theirs, and went east. The third day landed us in Richmond, more dead than alive, for we had only a small feed once a day and a few drinks of swamp or river water, tho our captors fed well. I hope I get a chance to even accounts with them sometime! They put us into a large building with hundreds of others and we had a hard time of it. We had no place to sleep and very little food of the worst quality. Day by day we grew more crowded, for I must confess they are pretty good trappers, and the Yanks seem to be as easy to catch as muskrats. I think we will learn fast and not be so easy to capture after a while!"

We lived (some os, and some died) in that hell they call Libbey Prison, till the latter part of November. Charlie and I tried to keep count of the time, but we got mixed and didn't exactly agree as to the day, but it was about November 20, that they marched several hundred of us out and took us to the railway station and ordered us to climb aboard some coal cars. We lost no time in obeying, for we had learned while in Libbey that our guards delighted to shoot a captive, and if he were slow in obeying, they dropped him. It was said that in order to keep the guards attentive a furlough of thirty days was allowed each one who killed a Yank.

We were no more than aboard the train than another batch of prisoners was brought to it. I have heard since that they probably came from Belle Isle Prison, which was getting full. Soon the train started and we were ordered to keep a couple of feet from the edge of the car. I passed the word to Mr. White to tell Charlie that I intended to jump off and take a chance of-being shot, rather than risk another term in prison. I hoped they might go with me. Part of the way the railway ran thru a wood where the ground was sandy. We went slowly, for these southern trains are so poorly equipped that it is impossible for them to go fast. Just ahead I saw where the brush was thicker than usual, and jumped so as to turn once over and land on my feet. Two of the guards shot at me as I ran into the brush and the others held their fire for fear, probably, that other prisoners would try to escape. I ran into the brush and kept going as long as I could, which was not very long, for I had been so poorly fed that I had very little strength. After a while I went on again, and came to a cornfield and got an ear of corn, and then sneaked back into the edge of a swamp till near sunset, when I came out. At the farther end of the cornfield I saw the track of a cart and followed it for a half-mile, when I came in sight of a set of buildings.

As darkness came on I approached the cabins where the slaves lived, and presently caught sight of an old darky. "Friend!" I called softly, "could you get me something to eat? I am a Lincoln soldier."

"Go back out of sight and I will come to you soon" he answered. "Well, Mrs. White, to go back to Charlie - I got enough food to last me a day, and continued on north, and in three days more got news of our army and soon came in. I was so petered out that they have sent me home to recover my strength. Now Charlie and Mr. White are not wounded, and are in as good health as can be expected. It may be they can escape, or will soon be exchanged, for I hear we have taken many Rebel prisoners.

"I am glad the news is no worse," said Mrs. White. "They are at least alive, and my man will get home if any of them do, for he is as tough as a little bull."

In reporting his adventures to his father William declared the early experience gained in hunting and trapping was invaluable to him. "If I had not known a little of woodcraft, I would never have regained our lines," he said.

CHAPTER X I X

Recruiting

As soon as William had recovered himself, he started out to make speeches to induce young men to enter the army, and to show people the necessity for supporting the government and making some sacrifices for the cause. Now he found something to say and plenty to come to hear him. "What Uncle Sam needs," he told the boys, "is fewer men who are willing to die for their country, and more who are willing to kill somebody!"

Again he said, "Shall we sit here at our ease and let the war drag on till our friends and neighbors who have volunteered and been captured, starve to death in southern prisons? If the people could only see or imagine, or realize what horrible hell-holes those prisons are, Uncle Sam would not need to draft anyone, but would find plenty to do to furnish arms for the swarms of volunteers that would beg for a chance to shoot a Reb!"

William took back with him at the expiration of his furlough twelve recruits. As to willingness to kill someone, he had a chance to prove himself shortly after rejoining his company. We will let him tell the story;

"One day when our company was on outpost duty, we were ordered to post a line of sentinels along a road thru a swamp. We had no more than got lined up than we heard the crack of a rifle, and one of our men was shot dead. It was Billy Lytle only a boy, but as good a soldier as any in our company. We figured it was the work of bushwhackers, and I begged Captain Parker to let me scout thru the swamp and see if I could get track of him, for if we just stood there in the road he might soon get another.

"All right," says he 'take all the time you want, and if we are ordered to move on I will let you know.' So I went into the swamp and found the trail of the man who had killed Billy. There seemed to be only one man and I followed him a few rods and then hid in a clump of bushes, for it was likely he would run a considerable distance into the swamp and wait to see if he were pursued, and if everything seemed quiet would return after a while.

It was about noon when I hid, and I waited there till nearly sunset and began to fear he had given up returning. - As I sat there I got to thinking of how I used to sit in a bush in my house waiting for the prairie chickens to come to their crowing grounds, or hidden near a 'crossing' to wait for the deer.

I was afraid it would be too dark to see the sights of my Spencer before I got a chance to use it, but while the light was still good I saw a man sneaking along the path he had followed before. He was carrying an old style Springfield rifle, and had a gray overcoat and blue pants. I had lowered the long-range sight on my rifle to short-range level and was ready for him, but hesitated a minute to make sure he was not some messenger and a friend. I watched him while he entered the clump of brush from which Billy had been shot.

He peered out into the road, examined his rifle and was just placing it to his shoulder when I put a Spencer bullet thru him just below his arm. You do not need a coroner to tell you what killed a man when you shoot him with that kind of gun at fifteen rods. We found he had a rifle, two revolvers, a Bowie knife, and two passes doubtless taken from messengers waylaid by him or his associates. It seemed a little like murder, but my Captain was pleased, a comrade saved and Billy revenged, so I lost no sleep over it."

The next autumn William was again taken prisoner, along with several more of his company. This time he determined to escape before they got him into a prison, even tho he had to take a long chance, for death by a bullet was preferable to death by disease and starvation. So he made his captors no trouble, but entertained them with stories, and seemed to think it was better to be a prisoner than run the risk of fighting. When evening came their captors (cavalry) camped near a cornfield to have feed for their horses handy. Some of the troopers began to pick ears of corn to carry to their horses, and William started to help them. One of the guards ordered him to stay with his comrades, but he laughed and said, "Keep me covered if you want to, but I am going to get a couple of ears of corn for my horse. Just look out there! -there is some real corn!" He stepped into the standing corn and started to run zig-zag fashion, and tho the guard fired at him, he escaped. As soon as it was dark, he started north and traveled several miles before he stopped. He had had no supper and but a mouthful for dinner, but had eaten a little raw corn. He hid that day and at dark again started thru the woods and kept on till he came to a road which ran east and west. He turned east and presently came to a little-traveled road running north, and followed that till near morning, when he heard a rooster crowing not far ahead. He had not found anything eatable that night, and the green corn of yesterday had not been of much use, so he was nearly starving, and determined to have that rooster for breakfast if he could find him. Guided by the crowing he soon found the chicken-house, which unfortunately for the rooster had no door. Grabbing the rooster by the neck to keep it from squawking, he hastened to the woods, and as he had no means of making a fire, breakfasted on raw chicken and pronounced it good. That day he hid in the brush where he could watch the road, and presently saw a negro going to work. He hailed him and asked if he knew where to find the Union troops. "Dey's a lot of them at Oak Grove," he replied. "Now where is Oak Grove?" "'Bout quite a ways over there -," pointing northeast. "Can I walk there in a day?" "In half a day if somebody don't stop you. But say - if you wait till dark I'll show you the way and bring two guns and join the army! I am getting tired of waiting for the Union soldiers to come. Sam and I have three guns hid, and we want to run away."

"All right, we'll go tonight if you can come to me. Meet me right here as soon after dark as you can get away."

William took the precaution of moving down the road at dark, so he could see who was coming before they got to the place of meeting; for altho he had faith in his man, he could not be sure. The evening was clear and there was a new moon, enabling him to see that but two men passed him and they were carrying three muskets. They went to the place where he had met the negro in the morning, and stopped and listened. William took the precaution of standing behind a tree while he addressed them - "who is it?"

"It's Sam and me."

"Are your guns loaded?"

"Yes -"

"Where did you get them?"

"Picked them up in the woods after the big fight last spring"

"Well, I am going to take a chance. Give me one gun and let's be going. You go ahead, and I will follow close behind."

William dropped the ramrod down the barrel of the gun (musket) they handed him, and found it empty. It looked suspicious, to say the least. "I have a pistol, and will load the gun. Give me the powder-horn and bullets."

"We have the powder and ball in a paper, like the soldiers use," said one.

"Give me one."

They handed over a cartridge and box of caps, and William quickly loaded the gun and felt much relieved.

"Are your guns loaded?"

"Sam said they were all loaded, but I reckon he was so scared running away that he didn't know much."

"Let me see," said William, as Sam handed over the other muskets and William soon found they also were empty.

"Give me the cartridge-box and caps," he ordered. They handed them over, and William told them to march ahead of him and walk as fast as they could, which he found was quite as fast as he could follow. He had said he would leave the guns empty till they got to camp, "for they might go off if they were loaded"

"Dats the best way," declared one of the negroes in a tone of relief. "I always afraid of Andy shooting me, 'cause he don't know much about guns."

The Union camp was a long way from where they started, for altho they went at a good pace, it was getting light in the east before they found it.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed a sentry stepping out of the brush and into the middle of the road as William and his guides approached. Now William had intended to keep far away from the camp till it was light enough to see the flag, for he was uncertain as to the position of the contending forces, and might run into a rebel camp. But the sentries were out farther than he expected, so now it was necessary to take a chance. So he replied, "A friend and messenger. Are you not an Ohio man?"

"No, I aint. I'm from Michigan. But advance and give the countersign."

William was so relieved he felt like shouting, but restrained himself and replied, "How can I give the countersign when I have been away from camp a week? Call an officer."

Passing the word along the line, a lieutenant soon appeared, and taking the party with him went into camp.

"Now what message have you?" he asked

"I wish to inform Captain Parker of the 106th Indiana that William Walter has returned to camp."

"He is not in our division, but I can get word to him. How about breakfast?"

"It wouldn't come amiss!"

After rejoining his regiment and finding a place for Sam and Andy, his Captain took him to the Colonel, who in turn took him to the General.

"I have brought you," said the Colonel, "a man well recommended by his Captain, who knows him well, as being useful in doing work in his home town for the recruiting officers. He went home on a furlough last winter and brought twelve volunteers with him when he returned."

"I am sending out a few men on furlough to go home and tell the folks how things are going in the army. There appears to be not much doing just now and I'll give you sixty days. Do us all the good you can, and come back looking better than you look now. Been sick?"

"Been captured and drank too much swamp water while getting back to camp." William replied.

When William got home he found to his great sorrow that nothing farther had been heard of his friends, Mr. White and son Charles. He made a few speeches for the recruiting and enlivened his talks by stories of camp life, to show that while there was much hardship in camp and on the march, there was also some fun and excitement.

"One of the boys," he related, "got badly frightened when we had a sharp skirmish in a big forest, and hid in a hollow log till he starved out. It was several days before he rejoined his company and reported that he had been lost in the woods. After a few weeks he confessed to his chum, who came from the same town, that he was badly scared, and seeing a big hollow log, had crawled in, and once in had been afraid to come out as he didn't know which side had possession of the ground. This chum and ~~the~~ ^{that} man who had been in the log, were making love to the same girl, and while the chum had promised not to tell, he got another fellow to spread the news in their home town, and when Bill got a furlough and went to call on his girl, she told him to get out, that she wouldn't keep company with a coward. "What would our country do if all the boys had crawled into hollow logs?" she asked him. "Couldn't" he replied, "Wasn't logs enough."

"There is a good guy in our company, a fellow from Orland, who is a great hand to whistle. Evenings and on the march he gives us lots of music, for he can whistle uncommonly well, and we like to hear him. But our sergeant thinks it does not

show proper respect for discipline, and is forever calling him down, but Kimball is soon bubbling over again. One day we were on a long march and Kimball was keeping time with his whistle, when we came to a small field, well fenced and containing about a dozen good hogs. Kimball was giving us hornpipes, jigs, reels, marches, and waltzes, when the sergeant ordered us to halt. We wondered what was up. The sergeant said; "Private Kimball will step to the fence and whistle a tune for the hogs. Kimball is not at all timid, and wetting his lips and leaning against the fence, looked solemnly at the hogs and whistled that old familiar tune, "Root, hog, or die." We all laughed and the sergeant ordered us to "March!"

Tho as a rule we are not allowed to forage, we do sometimes pick up a few things to keep them from going to waste. One day on a march, one of the boys was carrying a turkey, when the Captain came up and demanded where he got it. "Bought it, sir" was the reply.

"For how much?"

"Seventy-five cents."

"Did you pay for it?"

"No, but I told the man we would pay him when we came back."

One night one of the boys slipped thru the sentries, and was trying to slip back when the sentry caught him. He had a big watermelon.

"Give the password," ordered the sentry.

"Watermelon, and half goes to your tent."

"Pass."

In the next draft Sam Pridgeon, whose parents were from England and who were well acquainted with the Walter family, was taken. His mother in reporting it to Mrs. Walter, said, "I am glad of it! The ugly cuss was always fighting and now I hope he gets enough of it!"

Frances's husband was drafted twice, but Frances was sick and had several small children, so Father Walter hired a man each time to go in Mr. Dobson's place, for what with sickness and hard luck, Mr. Dobson was unable to hire a substitute.

CHAPTER XX

Back to the homestead

Meantime how were things going with Father and Mother Walter on the farm?

When William entered the army, their last child left home, and as they were unable to work the farm alone, they rented it to a Mr. Albright, who had a family of boys, and owned a nearby farm. He had enough help to farm both places, but no good house of his own, so he moved in with the old folks on the Walter farm. The Albrights were the best sort of people, quiet, industrious, capable and honest, so Father Walter was relieved of all anxiety over the welfare of the land and livestock. Mrs. Albright and her two girls made life pleasant for Mother Walter, and Father Walter was in a reminiscent mood

one evening, after he had been reading aloud from the Bible. He said, "Mother, how true is that promise of which you reminded me when I was despondent - 'work your work betimes, and in His time He will give you your reward'."

"Yes," responded Mrs. Walter absently, for her mind had been elsewhere while her husband was reading. "I hope we shall hear from William soon. If the war were only over!"

Just then there was the rattle of a buggy as one of the Albright boys returned from town, where he had driven to get the mail. He knew the anxiety of the old folks to hear the news, and was somewhat anxious himself, for were there another draft he might be obliged to go to the army. He came to the house bringing the weekly paper, and shouted "Good news! There has been a big battle at Gettysburg Pennsylvania, and the Rebs are handsomely thrashed and in retreat, and Grant has captured Vicksburg, and the Secesh bubble has burst!"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mother Walter fervently. "Then I hope to see my boy again, soon!"

But in this hope she was disappointed, for only a few weeks afterward she was stricken down by an epidemic of cholera, and lived only a few days, dying on August 23, 1863, in the seventy-fifth year of her age.

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John and Abe now had large fields cleared, and had a big crop of wheat that year of 1863, but the price was low, for wheat was cheap till the war was nearly over. Their homes were saddened too that summer by the death of two of John's children, and one of Abe's, of cholera. Also two of the children of Frances died of that dread disease that summer. What with war, pestilence and low prices, it was a sad year for the farmers in that section. But the darkest hour is just before day. Next year things took a turn for the better, and with better health, better prices and a certainty that the war was nearly ended, everyone looked ahead with hope.

But the old neighbors of Mr. Walter were nearly all gone. Mr. and Mrs. Roop were near their journey's end, and Mr. and Mrs. Bowers and John McMahon had been dead for several years.

The apple trees planted in 1837 were now in their prime and producing apples by the wagon-load. There was a cider mill in Fremont, where they made cider and apple jelly, and Father Walter was furnishing apples, cider and jelly for all his children. He had set out so many trees that half the apples supplied all his relatives and friends. He had also set two acres of peaches, but found no sale for them. Orchard pests were unknown for several years after the country was settled, and many orchards of apples and peaches were now in the county but they were unprofitable, for the supply was several times as large as the demand. No one would buy when he could go to an orchard and get half of what he picked.

When William returned from the war safe and sound,, and with the rank of lieutenant, he found his father so well provided for that he went to central Michigan and engaged in the lumber business, his father giving him three thousand dollars to enable him to buy a saw-mill, for now farm product prices were high and Father Walter was making money. He also bought a large farm for his daughter Frances about this time. His other children were prospering and needed no help.

Father Walter was a great lover of sheep, and had been breeding and improving them from the time he had his land fenced, and now had the best flock in the neighborhood. Just after the war, the progressive people of the county formed a company, purchased a half-section of land near the center of the county and started a county Fair. At the first fair Father Walter showed a fat sheep that weighed three hundred pounds and was a seven day's wonder to the people, for that was twice the size of the largest sheep most of them had ever seen.

After Father Walter had rented his farm he gave most of his attention to improving it, by ditching the low spots and applying land-plaster to the upland. Soon his farm was the banner wheat farm in that section of the country.

There was now a lively little school in a new schoolhouse only one-fourth of a mile from Father Walter's home, and he took a great interest in it, offering prizes to encourage the students to study, and telling them stories of his life in England and of the stormy voyage across the Atlantic, when they were for six weeks out of sight of land, and encountered a storm that nearly wrecked the ship. There was a standing invitation extended to the school to use his orchard on the bank of the lake as a picnic ground - an invitation which was often accepted.

In 1870 we find Grandfather Walter, as he was now more often addressed, eighty years old, still hale and hearty, and taking a lively interest in his children's children, his farm, his sheep and the school. On one of his frequent visits to the school, when the teacher asked him if he would give them a little talk, he replied; "When I was of school age and lived in England, I had little chance to attend school, but Father and Mother taught me to read and write and I went to school and learned to figure a little. I often think of my boyhood years and will tell you a little verse that I learned, and I want you to remember it till you are old men and women. It is so short you can learn it in a minute.

"The hills are dearest that our childish feet

Have climbed the earliest; and the streams most sweet
Are ever those at which our young lips drank,

Stooped to their waters o'er the grassy bank."

Grandfather tells us he has lost count of his descendents, and entertains us with many stories of days gone by, and ended by saying, "Time has made a lot of changes, but most of them are good ones."

As we bid him good-bye, thinking it is perhaps for the last time, we think of the words -

"When I remember all
The friends, so linked together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!"

It is 1876, the great Centennial Year of these United States, when we resume the thread of our narrative. Grandfather Walter still lives on his farm, but Father Time is rapidly overtaking him.

The autumn leaves are falling, and the old man and a half-dozen of his grandchildren are gathering hickory nuts in the 'Old house lot'. Near where the old stable stood is a hickory tree noted for its bountiful crops of nuts. Two of the larger boys are up in the tree, and a boy and two girls are picking up the fallen nuts. A third girl is with Grandfather Walter, sitting upon the little hill where the old house used to stand. Is Grandfather thinking of past times or present? Does he see in fancy the forms he saw there years ago, or does he in reality see their reincarnation in his grandchildren? Anyway he is not sad.

'Time robs not us of all our joys,
Old age has still a treasure store.'

He shows the children where the road used to be, and they can easily mark its passage thru the woods. Also he pointed out the 'Bear Tree', the site of the garden, and the old peach orchard. He picked up a bit of a broken plate, that he declared they had brought with them from England.

Toward evening they walked back to the house with well filled pails, and here we will leave them for the present.

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(1974- almost a hundred years later -

The part of the road can still be discerned, there is still one of the apple trees in 'the orchard'. About 1920 the 'Bear Tree' took three children and their father to reach around its trunk, but in the 40's, at a venerable age, it blew down and was cut into lumber. The small fenced field which held the original buildings and garden, is still called 'The House lot'. A huge hickory tree, a great nut-bearer, is in the same location (the same one?) still visited by the children, and some grown-ups - who picked nuts there when THEY were children.)

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CHAPTER XXI

Conclusion

Two months later, near Christmas time, when Grandfather Walter met with the Albright family for morning prayers, Mrs. Albright remarked that the old man was unusually earnest in his supplications, and seemed more wide-awake than common. After breakfast he took his cane and announced his intention of going to the spring (at the edge of the marsh, where he had put a large trough made from a log with a wooden spout to convey the water into it) to see if there was plenty of water for the stock. There was no snow and the weather was pleasant - "too fine a morning for one to remain indoors" Grandfather declared. He was gone so long that Mrs. Albright sent one of her girls to see if he were all right. In a few minutes Susy returned on a run, and with a scared look announced that Grandfather was lying dead in the lane. He had evidently died on his way to the spring, only a few minutes after leaving the house. He was eighty-six years old.

Tho for a time no Walter lived on the Homestead, it was only three years after the death of his father, till John, his son, came to pass the remainder of his life there. (His children were about ten to twenty years old when they moved there, traveling from Grand Rapids, Michigan, in a horse drawn wagon, two of the younger boys driving the stock on foot.)

John found much to be done before the old farm was as he wished to see it. There were stones to be dug out and hauled away or piled up, fences to be built to replace those built forty years before, and more barn room needed. All these improvements took time, and by the time they were realized, John was ready to turn the Homestead over to his successor. The maple trees near the house now form a fine grove, the house has been modernized, the maples shading it till it is hardly visible from the road. Electricity lights the buildings and yard and pumps the water, so the cows no longer need to wade snow in winter to go to the spring. A few of the apple trees tho more than a century old, still produce fruit, and the row of white oaks along the bank of the lake, have grown to noble size.

The rutty and muddy roads of summer are succeeded by an improved highway, bringing the farm to within a five minute drive of a railway town. In winter the roads are kept clear of snow, so there are no drifts to plow thru; for the mail-carrier and school bus use it daily. The great-grand-children of those that went to school in the little schoolhouse built in 1837, now ride in a two-thousand-dollar bus to a \$160,000 schoolhouse. Instead of hard benches with no desks, they are provided with luxurious seats, and all modern conveniences. Could Grandfather, Mr. Roop, and those and those who lived near them a century ago, but see the country as it now is, they might mistake it for Paradise!

Two miles north of the Walter Homestead, and at the corner of the farm once owned by John and Abe, is a little well kept cemetery; and there beside his faithful wife Grandfather Walter rests in peace. Nearby are the graves of John and Abe and their wives and several of their children. Only a dozen steps from the grave of John, lies that of Silas Doty, for whom John once worked, and who was, as John always maintained, so unjustly convicted of murder.

As we stand here and look off over the large level fields from which John and Abe cleared the forest, and where they raised such bountiful crops of wheat, we think how appropriate are those beautiful lines :

"Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,

Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;

How jocund did they drive their team afield !

How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !"

While so many of the Walter family are gone, more than two hundred and fifty of the descendants of that family of eight that moved to Indiana in 1837, still live - and when they are gone, the Homestead will still remain, for 'one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.'

(Finis - original book, 1940, by Enos Walter)

(Addendum - 1974. Four of John's descendants, born on the Homestead, live within two miles of it.)

Another grand-daughter lives two miles from the cemetery.

Others and several of their descendants live no more than ten or fifteen miles away. There are quite a few in northern Michigan, some in Virginia and S. Carolina, others as far away as Texas, Arizona, Montana, California, Washington and Alaska. For fifty-three years, many of them meet in August, at the Homestead.)



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